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SCHOOLS HEAD IN RIGHT DIRECTION

Report by David Cosgrove

IMPROVEMENTS across Dudley's primary schools show standards in the borough are 'moving in the right direction', according to an education chief.

Primary schools in the borough were ranked joint 79th in the national Key Stage 2 tables – an improvement of nine places compared to 2014.

Dudley Council's cabinet member for children's services Ian Cooper said the latest results show the authority's efforts are starting to bear fruit.

A total of 80 per cent of primary pupils in the borough gained level four or better in the key subjects of reading, writing and maths.

But there is still work to be done, according to Councillor Cooper, with the authority wanting every child to have a top-class education.

He said: "What we want to have is a good or outstanding school in every area."

"That's our ambition and what we're working towards, and what our schools, parents and children want as well."

"The latest figures show we're moving in the right direction across the board."

Challenge

"The Government agenda at the moment is all about continuous improvement and continuous challenge."

"Local authorities' focus is about supporting schools to improve year on year."

"That seems to be beginning to bear fruit because we're working in partnership with schools."

"The council really wants to thank the students, staff and parents for all their hard work – these results are down to them at the end of the day."

The top performing school this year was Cradley Coffe Primary in Halesowen, where 100 per cent of pupils managed to gain the benchmark grades.

It was also a good year for Mount Pleasant Primary in Brierley Hill.

The school jumped three places up the table to fifth spot, with 95 per cent of pupils taking Key Stage 2 tests gaining at least level four in the three key subjects.

Other impressive performers this year were Lutley Primary and Howley Grange Primary, both in Halesowen, which saw 99 per cent and 97 per cent achievement respectively.

Primaries in neighbouring Worcestershire were rated just below those in Dudley, but some of the county's top performers are in Wyre Forest district.

A total of 76 per cent of primary schools in Worcestershire achieved level four or better in the key subjects of reading, writing and maths.

PUB TURNS INTO FAIRYTALE CASTLE FOR CHRISTMAS



Magical display — Clare McGill-Williams with daughter Lois, six, outside The Summer House pub, at Gospel End Road, Sedgley

A SEDGLEY landlord's pub is his castle this festive season, as he has converted the inn into a lit-up fairy tale set for Christmas.

While the pub on Gospel End Road is called the Summer House, it is clearly equally prepared to be more of a winter wonderland when it's the season to be merry.

The pub is famous for its fairly lights but

landlord and landlady Phil and Karen Kennedy have gone a whole lot further with their Disney-style display.

With an estimated 10,000 bulbs, a wooden Disney castle, Mickey and Minnie Mouse made from cardboard, not to mention the house from the movie Up – it makes for a stunning view.

Phil, Karen's father and a member of staff got to work on the display straight after Bonfire Night. The illuminations are the talk of Sedgley, much of the Black Country and South Staffs. Karen said: "The previous landlord started the Christmas lights. It became a tradition, everyone knows about it and expects something new every year."

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COURT

Man charged with murdering his wife

A MAN has appeared in court charged with the murder of his wife.

Paul Abbott, aged 56, from Lodge Crescent, Netherton, was remanded in custody to appear before crown court on March 15 for a plea and case management hearing.

Mr Abbott, who was wearing a grey tracksuit, spoke only to confirm his details. Jacqueline Abbott, aged 54, died shortly after being found with serious head injuries at their house in Lodge Crescent, on December 11. Mr Abbott was arrested by officers at the scene on Sunday and charged with her murder.

FOOTBALL

New owners for £1m football centre

A FIVE-A-SIDE football centre in Rowley Regis has new owners after being bought for around £1 million.

Goals Soccer Centre in Cakemore Road was put up for sale earlier this month and sold after auction.

The arena carried a guide price of £1 million and sold for 'in and around' that amount.

The identity of the new owners has not been revealed but the future of football at the site has already been assured.

HEALTH

Russells Hall ranked best performing A&E

RUSSELLS Hall Hospital was ranked the best performing A&E in the country for waiting times during latest figures.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust saw 98.9 per cent of patients at the hospital being treated, admitted or discharged within four hours of arrival.

Bosses say they are delighted with the achievements of staff revealed in figures for October published by NHS England for A&E Attendances and Emergency Admissions. Trust chief executive Paula Clark said: "This is great news for our patients because this achievement places us among the very best in the country."

INSIDE

SIR LENNY HAS PAVED THE WAY



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Tributes to Black Country's Braveheart



Businessman Charles Hamner

A BUSINESS leader who strived to promote firms and organisations in the Black Country for more than five decades has died aged 72.

Tributes to Charles Hamner have poured in from industry bosses.

Mr Hamner, of Wordsley, was once dubbed the 'Black Country Braveheart' for his efforts to support and promote local businesses.

He died on December 1 at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital following a stroke, leaving wife Jill and son James.

He launched several companies in the area and blazed a trail for Black

Country industry as a senior officer with chambers of commerce and other business groups.

His sayings included: "If you want to talk positive about the Black Country then talk to me. If you want to talk negative, you've got the wrong person."

Current president of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce Ninder Johal said Mr Hamner's passion for business would be sorely missed.

"He was one in a generation, he was so much larger than life," said Mr Johal.

"He had so much to give to the re-

gion and he gave it all. He grew up and worked in the region all his life. It was part of his DNA. He put his own interests second and the region's first. He will be missed."

Mr Hamner began his career as a machine tool fitter at Brown Engineering in Lye. He later became managing director at Netherton Alles PLC and he started textiles and chemicals firm Kemtex in 1973 with just £100.

His other companies included Goldtan of Mercia, Enterprise Leasing & Finance Ltd, Charles Advertising Ltd and Charles Group.

Santa and grotto boat trips return to caverns

THE popular Santa's grotto has returned to Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines.

Visitors will be treated to the pantomime Red Riding Hood and will get the opportunity to meet Santa and receive a present in his illuminated underground grotto.

Santa boat trips will be running on certain days during December, between 10am and 5pm.

Nick Morris, chief executive at Dudley Canal Trust Trips Ltd, said: "Our hugely popular Santa boat trips are a magical experience like no other, our elves have been very busy wrapping thousands of presents."

The trust's Santa trips are now into their 30th year and always receive fantastic reviews from visitors.

This year NCS The Challenge, a leading social integration charity, has added to the festive decorations, working with the events team to make props for Santa's grotto.

The Santa boat trips last about an hour and tickets are priced at £10.80 for both children and adults. All children receive a present. The trips take place on December 18, 21 and 22.

For availability and booking please visit the trust's website www.dudleycanaltrust.org.uk or call on 0121 557 6265.

New move to ease rail congestion

HALESOWEN'S MP has said the Government must act to relieve congestion along a railway line linking Rowley Regis with Birmingham.

Conservative MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis James Morris said the creation of the West Midlands Combined Authority should speed up action to improve services along that vital rail route for commuters.

Speaking in the House of Commons, he called on Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin to act. Claire Perry, parliamentary under-secretary for the Department for Transport, answered 'yes' after Mr Morris asked if the new authority provided an opportunity for Government to work with local operators, such as London Midland, to relieve congestion on the line.

New classrooms for primary school

NEW classrooms were opening at a Stourbridge school this week, described as 'fit for the 21st century'.

The classrooms at Gig Mill Primary School have been built to accommodate growing numbers of pupils, set to reach 630 by 2017.

Beth giving all she can back with charity song

BETH Sherburn has carved out a successful singing career and now she is using the Christmas period to give something back.

Releasing her Christmas charity single – Snow Angels – the 24-year-old from Lower Gornal aims to raise as much money as possible for Make A Wish Foundation, saying it is a great cause to support and be involved with.

The singer has previously visited a number of schools across the UK to talk about the issue of cyber bullying.

She said that she is trying to do as much charity work as possible.

Beth added: "I'm just very grateful to be in the position I'm in now that I can try and make a difference. Even if it's only to one child, I feel like I've done something."

"To be able to send a message through my music is an incredible feeling."

"I'm lucky enough be involved with charities and the Make A Wish Foundation really is something I feel very passionate about."

Shocked

"To do something for these terminally ill children really does mean a lot to me."

Back in 2012, Beth was working at Debenhams in Merry Hill, when she was overheard singing by a top music producer who happened to be walking past while buying his wife a Christmas present.

She was left shocked when the music mogul behind Busted, Girls Aloud and Take That, John McLaughlin, went out of his way to tell her that she had a great voice.

She has since signed a £250,000 record deal with Purple Circle Records and last year toured with The Saturdays and has released a single, Joker, with rapper Lil' Wayne. Before all this however, Beth had been singing in public for many years, performing at Birmingham Rep with Matthew



From perfume counter to pop star — down-to-earth singer Beth Sherburn from Lower Gornal

Kelly and George Costigan in Don Quixote when she was 14.

She also performed in a gospel choir on the same bill as star soprano Katherine Jenkins at The Royal Albert Hall.

Beth has made national headlines with her remarkable rise, but even

when she had been spotted, she refused to leave her post at the perfume counter until after Christmas.

She added: "It's just so bizarre that this all started in my workplace. It was just a normal day — that's what's so amazing."

"I'm looking forward to the future,

working on my new album and hopefully going on my own UK tour next year. I appreciate everyone who has supported me, this is only the beginning."

You can buy the single for 79p on iTunes with all proceeds going to Make A Wish Foundation.

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Motorists owe council more than £160,000

DUDLEY Council is owed more than £160,000 in unpaid parking fines.

More than 30,000 penalty notices have been handed out to motorists flouting the rules during the past three years. But thousands of these have gone unpaid. Currently £164,737 is outstanding.

Often fines go unpaid because motorists cannot be traced or are foreign nationals.

Fines will either be £50 or £70 but if paid within 14 days the amount is reduced by 50 per cent.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental management, said: "Parking restrictions are in place across the borough and are designed to keep our roads safe. Income generated from parking charges is reinvested and helps improve our parking environment."

"We do chase up outstanding fines through enforcement agents if all other avenues have been exhausted."

In total, 10,002 tickets were handed out in 2013/2014, which rose to 10,954 in 2014/15, figures released under the Freedom of Information Act revealed. So far during the current financial year, 9,481 tickets have been issued.

Fines have to be paid although in cases of severe financial hardship the council may use its discretion on receipt of a request in writing giving full circumstances.

Last week it emerged the council had made £944,000 from car parking charges last year. Bosses said the figure was boosted as cash for potential VAT payments can now be used.

College is set to close its campus

STUDENTS face an 18-mile trek to attend courses when a cash-strapped college shuts its construction skills campus in Brierley Hill.

Birmingham Metropolitan College has revealed plans to close the Advanced Technology Centre, at The Waterfront, when the lease ends next September. Some courses will be transferred to Stourbridge College's campus in Hagley Road as part of a £1.8m revamp. But people wishing to study courses in plastering, bricklaying and painting and decorating will have to go to its campus in Erdington.

A consultation is under way with staff but bosses stress no redundancies are planned. The move is expected to save the college £10m over the next five years.

Breakfast club for businesses

HALESOWEN College is re-launching its breakfast club for businesses to network and hear a speaker. It starts on January 13 at 7.30am at The Stag and Three Horseshoes, Halesowen. Call 0121 602 7777 for details.

Community replace stolen presents

BURGLARS stole hundreds of pounds worth of Christmas presents in a break-in at a care home in Tividale but staff, neighbourhood police and families rallied the community to ensure the pensioners' party went ahead.

Staff at the home in Tividale were left stunned after raiders stole the gifts bought for elderly residents through fundraising. The burglary at Warrens Hall Care Home was discovered just a day before the planned Christmas party. The party was still able to go-ahead thanks to support from staff and the wider community, who helped replace presents.

The break-in at the Oakham Road care home happened between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning of last week.

Along with Christmas presents, other stolen gifts were for residents celebrating their birthday in the new year.

Managers said they had been 'shocked' but thanked everyone for their kind generosity which allowed a Christmas party to go ahead last Thursday.

Alcohol

Thieves made off with presents and alcohol which were all in place for the home's annual festive party.

Staff and family members along with the wider community helped gather a new selection of presents for them.

Home manager, Kal Jagpal, said: "We are all really shocked by what has happened and are support-

ing the police with their investigation. The whole team here at Warrens Hall will pull out all the stops to make sure our residents have a happy and festive Christmas."

Area Manager Maria Brazier added: "We are incredibly proud of our people and everything they have done for our residents after what happened earlier this week. We have been overwhelmed by the support from our community."

West Midlands Police spokeswoman, Gina Lycett, said the value of the stolen goods was around £250. Any information should call police on 101.

Neighbourhood police officers helped rally around charities and other organisations to donate gifts.

More than 600 jobs saved in Caparo deal

A FURTHER 623 jobs have been saved at collapsed industrial firm Caparo after a deal was sealed by administrators.

The remaining 10 businesses in the Caparo Industries Group – including seven in the Black Country – have been sold.

Jobs at businesses based in Willenhall, West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Cradley Heath, Dudley and Oldbury have been saved.

Administrators confirmed the businesses had been sold to the Gupta family, whose interests include the SIMEC and Liberty House groups.

Union officials called the sale "excellent news" helping to put workers' minds at rest in the run up to Christmas.

Among the businesses sold is Clydesdale Jones, Caparo Modular Systems and Caparo Advanced Composites, in Willenhall, where 142 jobs have been saved. At Caparo Precision Strip JB&S Lees, in Albion Road, West Bromwich, 170 workers' jobs have been saved.

In total 29 jobs have been protected at West Bromwich-based business Caparo Drawn Products and Fairbright Wire, in Phoenix Street. Administrators confirmed 123 positions have been preserved at Caparo Aluminium Bridge, in Bridge Street, Wednesbury, too.

Tube

Also sold is CMT Engineering, in Corngeaves Road, Cradley Heath, made up of tube fittings, dynamics, clamps and insulation businesses, where 40 have been saved.

Six jobs have been saved at Caparo Forging, in Marriott Road, Dudley, and 23 jobs at the group headquarters in Oldbury.

Matthew Hammond, Midlands region chairman for PwC and Caparo's lead administrator said: "We are delighted to have completed the sales – it is great news for the Midlands and the key manufacturing sites, particularly with so many skilled staff in these industries being given security at this time of year.

"This has been a complex and challenging assignment given the size and number of the business operations."

GMB union official, Russell Farrington, said: "This is excellent news for the West Midlands coming up to Christmas. This will hopefully put workers' minds at rest at this uncertain time. It has been a worrying few months for the workers that are left at Caparo and we indeed hope they can now enjoy the festivities.

"Over half of the workforce has been saved."

Life-saver is honoured with medal



St John Ambulance volunteer Hazel Knowles at home in Halesowen with her British Empire Medal

A COMMUNITY volunteer in the Black Country who has played a vital role in helping to save lives for more than 50 years has been awarded a British Empire Medal. action many times, providing crucial first aid at the scene of accidents as well as tending to people suffering from health scares.

She has also taught many others crucial life-saving skills over the years.

The 77-year-old grandmother was presented with her medal at St John's Church in Halesowen at a ceremony attended by family, friends and colleagues.

Mrs Knowles has also helped to raise money to rebuild the St John Ambulance HQ in Brierley Hill.

honoured and quite overwhelmed by the whole thing.

"If you know first aid you can save somebody's life. If there is an accident and you have got first aid around, it is worth its weight in gold. I enjoy helping people, that's what we were put on this earth for. It has been a large part of my life for a long time."

Mrs Knowles said: "I am highly

NEWS IN BRIEF

Food bank to net fans' donations

FOOD donations will be collected at Halesowen Town Football Club on Saturday.

An appeal has been made for fruit juices, UHT milk, jars of pasta sauce, packets of mash, tinned fruit, toilet rolls and toothpaste for a foodbank.

Organiser Rob Lloyd said: "We had a great response last year from the Yeltz fans. If every fan can bring just one item of food it will make a massive difference."

Donations will be collected from 12pm until the 3pm kick-off at the Old Hawne Lane entrance at The Grove.

Apartments plan at old fire station

THE former Cradley Heath fire station will be converted into homes after plans were given the green light.

The building on Mace Street, which has been empty for over a year, will be turned into nine apartments after getting the go-ahead from Sandwell Council.

Ward councillor Julie Webb said the decision to revamp the station was good news.

She said: "I welcome this development. It's much needed in the area, as we need small homes for people who haven't got any children."

Prize for school support workers

THREE members of support staff in a Rowley Regis school have received prizes for their work.

Gaynor Blunn, Rachael Hughes and Charlotte Smith received recognition for the work they do in their roles of learning support staff at The Westminster School.

It was awarded through the 'Stars in Our Schools' scheme.

The scheme is a celebration of school support staff organised by the trade union Unison.

Plant sings on charity album to help refugees

BLACK Country rock star Robert Plant has recorded a cover of Elbow's The Blanket Of Night for a charity release. The Long Road compilation album is aimed at helping the refugee crisis in Europe.

The former Led Zeppelin singer, who went to school in Stourbridge, said: "We have a worldwide international catastrophe – talking about it is one thing, doing something about it is another. It's paramount we all do our best one way or another to help."

Students will run cafe

STUDENTS from Sandwell College will be helping walkers warm up at their new cafe. The cafe will operate from 10.30am to 2.30pm on Tuesdays from the wardens' base at The Leasowes in Halesowen. They will be serving hot and cold drinks as well as soup, toast and cakes.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

WINTER is icumin-in, so it's off to the annual pre-Xmas entertainment, an evening of mediaeval music with ye authentic olde instruments. These events are a reminder of how our horny-handed ancestors were prepared to suck, blow, pluck, crank, squeeze or wallop almost anything in the hope of getting a tune out of it. Hollowed-out gourds, stretched skins, reeds, lumps of wood and pigs' bladders were all pressed into service. This concert featured a bagpipe which looked like a hockey stick inserted in a dead badger. I bet you'd get much the same noise using a live badger. The one disadvantage of England defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588 was that it delayed the arrival of guitars, and proper music, for several centuries.

WHEN Donald Trump calls for a ban on all Muslims entering the United States, he is surfing on one of those occasional waves of paranoia that have swept America ever since it was first settled. From witches to flying saucers, via Communists, alien abductions, Freemasons, Catholics and secret brain implants (can you feel it, just under your ear?), the US seems to need occasional panics and conspiracy theories. I can't think of any explanation for this desire to be frightened except that the US arms industry is enormous and every new panic surely sells more guns.

MIND you, when Trump alleges that cops are scared to enter some parts of London, the instant denial by the Metropolitan Police is unconvincing. Fact: most British towns and cities have their share of dodgy streets. I recall the Liverpool gag about a neighbourhood so tough that the police patrolled not in pairs but in threes – and that was inside the police station. This joke is at least 50 years old.

WE need safe, secure, flood-proof homes on high, well-drained plots. We do not need to trim a piffling 20 minutes off the rail journey time from London to Birmingham. As Cumbria drowns, our beloved leaders are still preparing to spend £50,000 million or more on HS2. What a monumentally misguided set of priorities. Our grand-children will think we were mad.

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Cousins locked up after knife threat in robbery

TWO cousins burst into a neighbourhood convenience shop wielding a kitchen knife and a dumbbell weight bar as they demanded cash from terrified staff, Birmingham Crown Court was told.

Dwaine Keane, aged 33, threatened staff at the Co-op store in Quinton with the knife and ordered them to open the till. His cousin Lee Keane, aged 40, from Smethwick, brandished the heavy weight as both men jumped onto the counter and helped themselves to cash.

The balaclava-clad robbers, who have now both been jailed for four years each, were caught on CCTV camera at the shop in Quinton Road West after they walked into the premises at around 7pm on Sunday, October 11.

Both criminals were wearing dark clothing and had their faces almost completely covered.

Leaping

The CCTV footage shows them threatening a check-out worker and then leaping over the counter to get their hands on the shop's takings.

Staff can be seen pleading with the robbers in the video.

Then the Co-op workers alerted police as the pair fled on foot and a nearby patrol car was sent to Simmons Drive, where the men had last been seen heading.

The pair were arrested

within five minutes of the 999 call.

Cash and the weights bar were found on the men along with a balaclava worn by Lee Keane, but the knife was missing.

Officers called for back-up to search the area and the 6-inch blade was found in the street a few yards from where Dwaine Keane, of Lower Higley Close, Quinton, has been arrested.

He along with his cousin Lee Keane of Lowry Close, Smethwick, pleaded guilty to robbery when they appeared at Birmingham Crown Court and they were each jailed for four years.

Detective Constable Darren Ford, from the force's Criminal Investigation Department, said after the hearing: "Knife crime has no place in society."

"Shop staff should not have to be confronted with this type of threat and the anxiety it causes."

Sir Lenny has paved the way



Sir Lenny with MOBO founder Kanya King, mayor and mayoress Steve and Jayne Walther, look at the slab

"WITHOUT Dudley there's no me" – the words of Sir Lenny Henry as he returned to his home town to unveil his latest honour.

The comedian and actor, who was knighted by the Queen at Windsor Castle this month, had a paving stone laid in his honour in Buffery Park last week.

Sir Lenny was recognised by MOBO and ITV2 with the Paving the Way award for his career achievements.

Recipients of the award have a permanent slab laid in a place which played a key role in their lives.

Sir Lenny, 57, spoke of his delight at the stone being installed in the 'legendary' park. It slightly edged the knighthood," the Comic Relief founder said.

The unveiling was attended by MOBO Awards founder Kanya King MBE and Dudley mayor and mayoress Steve and Jayne Walther.

Sir Lenny said: "Dudley is a legendary place and Buffery Park is a legend within that legend. This is where I first met Tommy Cooper for my friends, where I first did impressions and told jokes.

"This is where I'm from, so it's a huge honour."

Children's services chief is brought in

A COMMISSIONER has been parachuted in to run Sandwell Council's beleaguered children's services department.

The service was ranked inadequate by Ofsted inspectors in June, just two years after the same result triggered upheaval at the authority.

Eleanor Brazil has now been sent in by the Government to turn the department's performance around. If notable improvement isn't made by the middle of 2016 then the running of the council's children's services could be taken out of its hands.

Mrs Brazil was previously installed at Slough Council to turn around its struggling services.

The appointment was announced as Prime Minister David Cameron revealed radical reforms which mean any children's services rated inadequate by Ofsted must show 'significant improvement' within six months. If not it will be taken over by high-performing authorities, experts or charities.

Mr Cameron said: "Children's services support the most vulnerable children in our society. They are in our care – we, the state, are their parents; and we are failing them. It is our duty to put this right."

Sandwell's Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children's services, welcomed the commissioner's appointment.

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The Force Awakens to top a bumper year at the cinema

DUDLEY Showcase cinema is bracing itself for its busiest weekend of the year with the release of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* — the eagerly-awaited revamp of the phenomenally popular sci-fi saga.

Some devoted fans have already seen the movie, at special midnight screenings in the early hours of this morning (Thu).

The blockbuster is set to fill 3D, 2D and XPlus screens at the Castle Gate Way

cinema for many days to come.

The seventh episode of the *Star Wars* story, which will also be shown at the Odeon Merry Hill and at screens across the Black Country and Birmingham, will reunite fans with Harrison Ford as Han Solo. It is directed by JJ Abrams, the creator of TV's *Lost* who also rebooted the *Star Trek* and *Mission Impossible* franchises.

Mark Barlow, general manager of UK theatres for Showcase, said: "The release of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* is shaping up to be the biggest cinema event in history."

"As the most anticipated film of 2015, it has overtaken pre-sales of *Spectre* and *Fifty Shades of Grey*, both of which were record-setting films.

Demand

"The demand for the film has been unprecedented. It has seen record-setting advance sales in the UK, surpassing the pre-sales of any other film. We are continuing to add more screenings to meet demand, across all formats that the film is being released in."

"*Star Wars: The Force Awakens* will run well into 2016, giving people plenty of chance to see it in the New Year, whether for the first time or for repeat viewings," added Mr Barlow.

The *Star Wars* epic ends a year seeing three of the six highest grossing films of all time being released, *Jurassic World*, *Fast & Furious 7* and *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. Events will continue to be held at The Slade Rooms in Broad Street.

A Night With Ricky Hatton will be the last show with staff moving out of the Civic and Wulfrun by January 4. Work will then get under way to increase the capacity for each venue.

The main Civic Hall will be given a second balcony, while the Wulfrun will also get a balcony. Access for disabled visitors will be upgraded.

There will be a phased reopening and it has already been confirmed the venues will temporarily reopen for the Grand Slam of Darts in November.

The final events include Ned's Atomic Dustbin on Saturday and a concert by Punjabi folk artist Hans Raj Hans on Sunday before Mancunian boxer Hatton talks about his life.

Events will continue to be held at The Slade Rooms in Broad Street.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews

Priorities all wrong on Gazza allegation

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, when Gazzamania was at its height, it felt like I was the only person in the country who wondered what all the fuss was about.

Yes, there was the occasional flash of brilliance, those electrifying mazy runs that would leave defenders bamboozled, but it always seemed to me he was more famous for crying, belching, and generally making a fool of himself than for anything he achieved on the pitch.

Now, as he approaches his 50th birthday, the former midfielder shows few signs of maturing.

His battles with the bottle and bizarre behaviour have been well documented, and last month he stunned the audience at Wolverhampton Civic Hall with a stupid comment about not being able tell whether a black security guard was smiling or not.

Funny? Not remotely. Offensive? Certainly. The man is clearly an imbecile. And if I were the security guard in question, I would feel entitled to question my employers about whether this idiot should be allowed to perform at the Civic again.

Inquiry

What I do not understand, though, is how an unfunny and offensive joke from a man who is clearly not the sharpest tool in the box has become a police matter.

West Midlands Police says it has received a report of a "hate crime", has taken a statement from the victim and an inquiry is ongoing.

But crude and objectionable though the comment was, I doubt very much whether there was any hatred in Gazza's words, let alone a crime.

I would also be very surprised if the complainant was the security guard himself, who I suspect is made of sterner stuff.

More likely, I imagine, it will have come from one of those thin-skinned activists who is always first to take offence on somebody else's behalf, and spends most of their spare time urging people to sign petitions on Facebook.

Maybe it is unfair to blame the police for investigating the alleged "hate crime". If they ignored it, the Guardian readers would have had a field day. And of course, there may be more to the story than meets the eye.

On the other hand HM Inspectorate of Constabulary has just panned West Midlands Police, saying the force is failing to protect children from abuse and failing to carry out basic checks on sex offenders. You may also recall that earlier this year, head of the National Police Chief's Council Sara Thornton said that burglary victims may not always be visited at home as police prioritise other crimes, saying that officers need to shift their focus away from "traditional" offences.

Well call me a "traditionalist" if you like, but I think somebody might have their priorities wrong here.

Joel Richards, who was also named as Referee of the Year



Councillor Darren Cooper attends the official opening



Owen and Suzy Richards on the badminton court in the hall



Sports hall honour for family hit by tragedy

Emotions ran high as a sports hall was officially opened in memory of Joel Richards.

DAVID COSGROVE reports

"I WISH Joel had been a Premier League referee and he was here unveiling his own plaque for his own merits – not having to do it like this."

The heartbreaking words of the mother of Tunisia terror victim Joel Richards as a sports hall in his home town was named after him.

The Joel Richards Sports Hall was unveiled by his younger brother Owen at the official opening of Wednesbury Leisure Centre last Wednesday.

Joel, aged 19, was murdered in the terror attack in Sousse in June, alongside his uncle Adrian Evans of Bilston, and grandfather Patrick Evans – while Owen survived.

The boy's mother Suzy said the loss of three members of a close-knit family group had left 'a big void', but 16-year-old Owen has been a rock.

Suzy, 46, said: "I'm unbelievably proud but also very emotional."

Shining

"There were lots of tears because it's so sad that this had to happen."

"It was heartbreakingly for me, my mum and Owen and there's a big void in our lives now."

"We went from a family of six to a family of three within 24 hours."

She added: "For Owen especially it's so difficult to have to deal with such a big loss at such a young age."

He is a product of my dad [Patrick], my brother [Adrian] and Joel as they invested so much time in him and that's shining through now."

Owen has saved us.

"The three of us all work together."

"He's grown up a lot and now he knows what's important in life."



Owen Richards and The Mayor of Sandwell Barbra Price officially open the sports hall

"What happened puts things into perspective."

Owen unveiled the plaque at a ceremony yesterday then headed into the sparkling new sports hall to have a quick session trying out the badminton and table tennis facilities with his school friends.

The teenager has shown courage and inner strength beyond his years to deal with the aftermath of the tragedy.

Suzy said he takes after his older brother – who was on course to become a Premier League referee – and is now looking to follow the same career.

Although he only lived to 19, his mother said Joel 'achieved more than some people do in their whole lives'.

Saddlers fan Joel, a former pupil at the town's Stuart Bathurst and Wood Green schools, was a keen sportsman and promising

football referee. "He brought the best out of everybody," Suzy said.

"Joel was just so kind and had a great character."

"Owen is immensely proud of his brother and is now hoping to take refereeing up himself."

Six months on from the tragedy, the emotional scars still run deep for Suzy, her mother Maureen and Owen.

Emotional

But sticking together has helped them come through.

Owen, who turned 16 just a month before the attack, has started sixth form at Stuart Bathurst RC High School and College in Wednesbury.

He is studying PE, maths and biology at A-level. "We're still feeling it really hard,"



Owen, left, with his uncle, grandfather and Joel

Suzy said. "The tributes are lovely but it's very emotional and there's a big void."

"We are all staying strong for Owen."

"My motto is 'if Owen can do it, then we can'."

"Getting through each day isn't easy."

Emotional Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper said: "None of us need to be reminded of the dreadful events that took place earlier this year in Tunisia."

"As a council we took the decision to name the sports hall after Joel Richards."

"No-one can underestimate the feeling across Sandwell about the tragic news about these people who were so brutally murdered on holiday in Tunisia."

"We wanted to name this new sports hall after Joel because we knew he was a keen sports enthusiast, so as a council we talked to the family and decided we would do it."

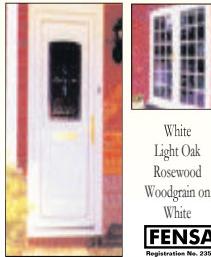
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Remembering Charlie's cartoon legacy

I WAS honoured recently to talk to Steve Grigg on the show I host for Black Country Radio. I knew Steve from school and probably was unaware at the time the immense contribution his father Chaz (Charlie) made to our lives.

Through the course of the brief hour we had chatting on the Omnia n Chain Steve outlined how his father followed a dream from working in Oldbury to drawing such characters as Korky the Cat and Desperate Dan, iconic figures in the comics most kids would fetch from the paper shop on a Saturday.

There were numerous others and saucy postcards you would get by him, from any trip to the seaside. As the conversation progressed it became obvious just how important this man was to the social culture of a generation and how in some way locally this should be recognised. Steve has so much material that his dad created it shouts out to be part of an exhibition, a publication of some kind. Even more than these ideas, which in effect I would love to be involved in is a more permanent marker of the man's work in either Oldbury or Langley.

DR BRION DAKIN
(AKA Billy Spake Mon), Tividale

Show of support for the hospice

COSELEY Support Group for Compton Hospice under the leadership of Iris Gamble (Chairperson) and the Committee have once again raised a magnificent sum for the Hospice.

On November 20 at Brook Street Community Centre in Tipton, an entertainment show was held. The entertainment included a group, Out of the Shadows, who were fantastic, and brilliant comedian Dougie Parker.

On the night a cheque for a £7,000 was presented to a doctor representing the Hospice. A special presentation of framed certificate was made to Michael F Sampson, who personally raised £1,400 over the year by donating to Coseley Support Group, all his fees for a variety of talks he gives.

Once again a lot of credit for organising the show must go to the hard working Keith Whitehouse, who goes to great lengths to make sure the show is a success.

J D CLIFFORD
Himley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Time to get tougher over deaths on roads

KILLED BY drunken driver, killed by speeding car, hit and run, these are the headlines we read and hear in the news nearly every day.

What are the courts doing about it, what is the law doing about it?

If anyone ran down the road with a knife stabbing and killing people or with a gun shooting and killing, they would either be locked in a mental institute or charged with murder. Kill with a lump of metal because of being over the limit or going faster than the law allows, a slap of the wrist.

A car in the wrong hands, or in the hands of a person who is unable — or will not — think, is a weapon.

Anyone using it as such or not taking the consequences of their actions should be treated the same as using any weapon used to take a life.

The Government promised a life sentence would be life, the usual now seems to be a maximum of eighteen years halved for good behaviour.

N D CADDICK
Coseley

Today it's 'our will be done'

I THOUGHT I lived in a Christian country, well I did as a child.

Most people went to church on Sundays and children went to Sunday School because it was the Lord's day of rest.

Now our God hardly exists anymore, taken over by Sunday shopping, football, car boot sales, etc — no time to pray and ask God to guide and protect us from the evil we see around today.

A lot of children are not taught the Lord's Prayer, maybe their parents don't know it? How times have changed. We were taught it at school.

I'm coming into my 96th year and what a change I have seen over the years. It's from 'Thy will be done' to our will be done, and the latest news, trying to stop the Lord's Prayer in case it offends other religions.

Where are the voices of our church leaders?

V MALPASS
Wall Heath



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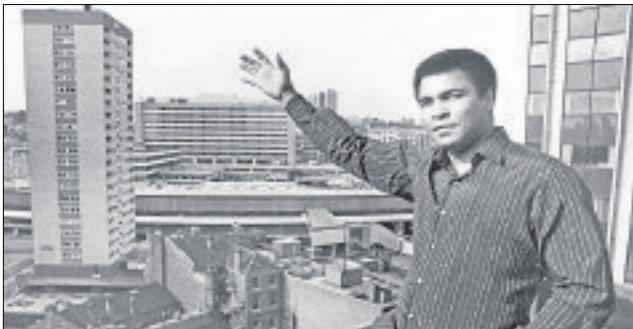
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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL



Ali got a hero's welcome wherever he went



Ali surveying the Birmingham skyline during one of his visits



A photo of Pat with Ali, signed by the great man himself



Microphone in hand – Mohammed Ali addressing all his faithful fans during his visit

Day The Greatest made bee-line for fan's home

HE is the greatest boxer of all time – and one Black Country family has fond memories of time with Muhammad Ali.

Photos uncovered in the Express & Star archives and shared on its Facebook group of The Greatest on his visits to Birmingham in 1979 and 1983 prompted Pat Smith to share her tale of the night Ali came to Wolverhampton, and even stopped by her house to bless the family cat.

Mrs Smith's father Leslie was renowned in the city as Ali's number one fan, and regularly appeared in the paper after meeting him at training camps and after fights, often bagging himself memorabilia, including fight-worn gloves and boots.

But ironically, when The Greatest came to visit his home city, Leslie was on the other side of the world. Mrs Smith, aged 59, a business manager from Bradmore, remembered: "Dad went to visit my sister in Australia,

MEMORY LANE

By Nick Humphreys

it had been planned for a long time. And he said to me if Ali comes, you've got to go and meet him and show him a photo of the two of them together, otherwise he'd wonder where I am. He told me to take a photo of the two of them off the wall and that would get me past security.

Phone

"Anyway, Dad was away and we heard Ali was coming to Birmingham. When we got to his hotel, we gave the security guard the picture and told him to show it to Ali and tell him I'm Leslie's daughter and he'd know who we were.

"Ali came up to me and put his arms out and hugged me. He said: 'Where's my Leslie?' So I had to tell him, he's gone to Australia. He said to get him on the phone, so we called my sister's house and he picked up."

"Ali was having a laugh and a joke with him, saying 'I've got your daughter on my bed. People see the showman in the ring and out of the ring, well he's like that in private as well.'

"Anyway, Ali said to my Dad that he was going to go to his home city on the Saturday so he could bless it.

"Dad asked if he would go to our house and bless the house and our cat. Ali agreed so we made arrangements for the following day. We were to meet him at The Sheraton on Raglan Street."

After Mrs Smith had introduced Ali to the landlord and landlady of the venue, Ali gave a speech to fans.

She added: "He made this lovely speech to the crowd, where he told them he loves this city because it's the home of his number one fan.

"We had about 25 people waiting back at the house, and it was good because some of them didn't really believe how close Ali's relationship with my dad was. My dad saw him again lots of times before he died in 1993, aged 79."



Mohammed Ali unveiling a plaque during his visit to the West Midlands

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£565,000 earmarked for Merry Hill lights

A £565,000 scheme to improve congestion around Merry Hill by upgrading traffic lights at various points along a main route nearby has been revealed.

An overhaul of the lights next to the popular shopping venue has been unveiled by Dudley Council bosses, in an effort to cut down on congestion.

Any problems with the ageing traffic signals can lead to massive tailbacks on the roads network around Merry Hill.

Council chiefs have successfully applied to Centro for £455,000 from its Better Bus Area Fund cash pot. The cash-strapped authority will add £110,000 from its own coffers to complete the works, if the scheme is given the green light at a meeting on Monday.

Busy

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "It's really busy down there. Those traffic lights need to be kept working at all times."

"They need to be replaced just because of sheer age. The number of times they break down and need to be replaced is getting too much."

By David Cosgrove
They're a very important set of traffic lights so we've got to maintain them as best we can. They were the next on the list of lights needing to be done.

We saw an opportunity for some funding, bid for it and got it."

The traffic signals to be improved or upgraded include those at the A4036 Merry Hill's junction with The Boulevard and Coppice Lane, the A4036 Merry Hill's junction with Mount Pleasant, High St and Quarry Bank, and the A4036 Merry Hill pedestrian crossing.

A report issued by the authority states: "The scheme will improve the efficient operation of the traffic signals for the benefit of both general traffic and buses."

Tributes to respected property lawyer, 60



Property lawyer Martyn Morgan has died aged 60

ONE of the Black Country's most respected lawyers has died after a stroke. Tributes have been paid to Stourbridge-born Martyn Morgan, who headed QualitySolicitors Talbots in Wolverhampton.

He died aged 60 at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital and leaves behind his wife Mary and five children.

The residential property specialist was a popular figure and renowned among his colleagues for commitment to his work and his sense of humour. Mr Morgan, a former student at King Edward VI Grammar School, had just overseen the George Street company's best ever year in business, achieving £8 million of annual fees, and becoming one of the top 20 conveyancing firms in the UK.

Rachel Pardoe, practice director, said: "Everyone is shocked and naturally saddened by Martyn's sudden passing and our thoughts are with Mary and their children. He was the heartbeat of the business and wasn't afraid to try new ideas and innovate the way we did things in what is still a very traditional sector. Despite his immense workload he would always make time for people and, more times than not, his larger-than-life character would brighten up the day with one of his witty jokes."

He always believed that local people and businesses shouldn't have to travel to the big cities and pay extortionate fees to get the right legal advice."

Mr Morgan took over Quality Solicitors in 1991 when the practice had only a handful of staff. The company now has 190 employees and seven offices.

Mr Morgan was a massive fan of Aston Villa football club and enjoyed keeping fit, taking part in both the London and New York marathons.

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Thursday 24 December

Friday 25 December

Monday 28 December

Tuesday 29 December

Wednesday 30 December

Thursday 31 December

Friday 1 January

Christmas collection date

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No change

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Tuesday 29 December

Wednesday 30 December

Thursday 31 December

Saturday 2 January

Sunday 3 January

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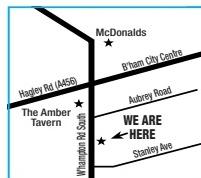
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Fun trip back to the 60s, you can spray that again



The cast of Hairspray are in action at the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham during the festive season

Hairspray, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE musical with big hair and even bigger heart, Hairspray, is back in a joyous new production that is providing the alternative to panto in Brum this festive season.

However, that doesn't mean it hasn't got a dame. Indeed, it has a hefty helping of man in drag with Tony Maudsley (best known as hairdresser Kenneth in Benidorm) as a gruff-voiced Edna Turnblad, a role made famous by Divine and then John Travolta in film and Michael Ball in the West End.

She's the formidable mother of Tracy Turnblad, the beehived high school teen who takes it on herself to integrate TV's Corny Collins dance show in 1962 Baltimore so black and white youngsters can dance together.

The civil rights message is contained within the wittiest and warmest Broadway musical of the past 15

REVIEW BY
LEON BURAKOWSKI

years and it's good to have Hairspray back, even though it's only been two years since its last UK tour. That featured Freya Sutton as the irrepressible, all-singing, all-dancing Tracy, and she's back to reprise her dynamic performance.

The new production is enhanced with better sets including some nice attention to details, like the genuine 60s US ads that play on monitors during the interval. There is fine support from West End stalwart Claire Sweeney as the venomous Velma Von Tussle and Dex Lee as the slick, soulful Seaweed. Pint-sized dynamo Karis Jack has all the right moves as Little Inez, Seaweed's sister; Monique Young is a gem as Tracy's awkward best friend Penny; and Ashley Gilmour sets hearts a-flutter as teen idol Link.

Former Blue Peter presenter Peter Duncan is a revelation, showing that he is a real showman and entertainer in the role of Edna's husband Wilbur. Their funny and sentimental duet You're Timeless To Me was a highlight, as was former X Factor finalist Brenda Edwards delivering a truly soul-stirring performance of gospel number I Know Where I've Been as the big, blonde and beautiful Motor-mouth Maybelle.

The only minor quibble on Monday night was that some of Scott Whittman and Marc Shaiman's amusing lyrics were lost in the sound mix, though it was good to have a live band at the back of the stage.

This production of Hairspray is a toe-tapping, finger-snapping hoot that got a standing ovation from a delighted audience... you can't stop the beat, at least not until it ends its run at the Alex on January 2.

Stereophonics are rock solid

GIG REVIEW

by Leon Burakowski

Stereophonics, Genting Arena THE day after sharing the NEC stage with mega stars at the BBC Music Awards, rockers Stereophonics were back in the spotlights at the Genting Arena.

This time it was in front of thousands of fans who had come purely to see them and enjoy probably the best, down-to-earth no nonsense melodic rock band on the live circuit.

This was a special night for the five-piece built around the Welsh core of guitarist and singer Kelly Jones, with his inimitable sandpaper and velvet vocals, and bassist Richard Jones, who looks like a throwback to the rockabilly era. It was a gig sandwiched between adding rock muscle to the BBC show and a triumphant homecoming at Cardiff on Saturday night.

For Kelly, in his usual jeans and leather bomber jacket, it was extra special because in the days when Cardiff lacked a big venue the NEC was where he saw his rock heroes, such as AC/DC. He recalled an Aerosmith concert when he was "just two rows from the (expletive) back". Kelly praised Brum's rock pedigree, Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, and remembered Birmingham gigs at small venues such as Moseley's Jug of Ale.

Stereophonics have released nine albums in 19 years. It was the early albums and two latest, Graffiti On The Train and Keep The Village Alive, that provided the sources for this 26-song, two and quarter hour gig.

They were out of the blocks at top speed with exhilarating rocker C'est La Vie from Keep The Village Alive and kept up the momentum with I



Stereophonics played for more than two hours at the Genting Arena, Birmingham

him after their cover version paid for his conservatory.

That honey and whisky voice of Kelly Jones, the major reason why Stereophonics have as many female as male fans, was showcased by his acoustic version of Traffic and, at the piano, the racy Sunny from the new album. After Local Boy In The Photograph, the band returned for four encores including their anthem Maybe Tomorrow and biggest hit Dakota.

That's the Stereophonics, hard graft and satisfaction guaranteed.

Animal lovers will go bananas for chimp art



Primates keeper Nicola Wright with talented chimps Mandy, Malaika and Fanny and chimp art work at Dudley Zoo

FANCY becoming the owner of a unique piece of artwork painted by a cheeky chimp?

Now anyone who adopts one of the Dudley Zoo chimps, or renews their chimp adoption before the end of the year, will be entered into a raffle to win the colourful canvas.

Talented chimps Mandy, Malaika and Fanny created the painting in their spare time as a way to showcase their 'arty side'.

Head of lower primates Nicola Wright said: "The girls had a good go at painting the canvas and the result

is quite impressive. Most of the chimps had a go but Malaika did the most and added the finishing touches."

This isn't the first time the artistic apes have painted a picture. Back in March, Mandy brushed up on her painting skills and created a masterpiece now on the wall in the zoo's monkey tails exhibit.

The zoo currently has seven chimps in their care - Mandy, Fanny, Barbie, Malaika, Binti, Mali and Banika - who can all be adopted. For details on how to adopt one of the chimps, or another animal, visit www.dudleyzoo.org.uk/support-us/adopt-animal



Chimp art: Jackson Pollock influence?

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Carjack victim hits out at attacker's sentence

"THE whole episode has destroyed my family and the verdict has left us disappointed."

Those are the words of car-jacking victim Reg Stocking after his brutal attacker Andrew Jones was jailed for 14 years.

Mr Stocking, aged 79, has been left wheelchair-bound following the attack in May this year.

At the hearing on Friday, Judge Stephen Eyre QC described Jones, 34 of Manley Close, West Bromwich, as cowardly and callous' after he was sentenced via video link at Birmingham Crown Court having refused to attend court.

He was told he would spend at least nine years behind bars and will not be considered for release until he was deemed not to pose a threat to the public. When he is released, he will spend a further four years on licence.

Mr Stocking said: "At the last hearing we were told he could be looking at 25 to life, so we did expect him to get more than he has. The whole episode has destroyed my family and the verdict has left us disappointed, but we must be happy that this evil man is now off the streets."

Mr Stocking's son, David, said: "I feel he should have got more, if only he knew how much damage he has caused. Our whole family has been left upset but at least now after the verdict we can all try moving on with our lives, that's what Dad promised us."

Judge Eyre had said a life sentence was a possibility when Jones was found guilty following a trial last month. A victim statement was read to the court in which Mr Stocking explained how his life had been totally changed by the attack, how he is unable to walk unaided and lost his teeth.

Drug addict Jones lay in wait as Mr Stocking moved his car into a gated



Andrew Jones, who has been jailed for 14 years over the carjacking



Victim Reg Stocking seen in the wheelchair he now has to use

driveway in Chapel Street on May 10. The attacker jumped into the car as the pensioner opened the gate. Realising what was happening, Mr Stocking, who had previously worked in security, attempted to stop Jones but was hit by the car and dragged along underneath it.

The robber drove off in the car without a thought for his victim who was left lying in the road. The court heard how he had taken the car to try and raise money for drugs.

Just eight hours later, Jones used the Peugeot 207 as a getaway car at a burglary on Groveland Road, Dudley Port, where a TV was stolen.

Mr Stocking has previously said

his life has been 'left in tatters' from the attack and feels as though he has served his own life sentence.

Birmingham Crown Court heard how Jones had only been released from prison seven months before the attack after stabbing a man 11 times. He also has 24 previous convictions relating to the theft of vehicles.

Jones had denied robbery, causing grievous bodily harm with intent, burglary and witness intimidation – but the jury found him guilty on all four counts. Ian Crooks, senior crown prosecutor from West Midlands Crown Prosecution Service said: "The attack on Mr Stocking can only be described as heinous and cowardly."

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IT'S HARD to imagine that anyone would leave the sunny beaches of Spain or Portugal to find potential life-changing solutions at a dental practice in the Black Country heartland of Dudley.

But the town's Denture Clinic, considered by some as their final opportunity to find a resolve for long-term teeth problems, has seen patients do just that.

The clinic's prosthetics, prescribed and handcrafted on premises at this multi-disciplined dental practice in North Street, also has attracted people from Dorset, the Isle of Anglesey, the Isle of Skye and London.

Over the last decade, principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353, has encountered some heart-rending accounts of how ill-fitting teeth have caused unnecessary suffering, eroded confidence,

restricted social engagement and been responsible for shocking dietary regimes.

"Thankfully, we have never failed to deliver a successful clinical solution," he says.

"The power of viral marketing never ceases to amaze me as we have never promoted our work beyond the Midlands. But the remarkable reputation the team has built here has found an eager audience – the last challenging case coming from Llandudno," Steven adds.

Remarkable reputation

Quick to point out, the core philosophy of both his Denture Clinic and North Street Dental & Implant Clinic, Steven says: "We don't sell solutions, but provide honest, comprehensive, clinical appraisals that help patients

make informed choices." There is no charge for an initial consultation and never pressure. "Sometimes I get patients back a couple of times before they commit. The information is free, as is the consultation.

"If something won't work, we'll tell them, but there's no reason for anyone to put up with uncomfortable and unsightly dentures." It wasn't that long ago that an amalgamation between glamour and dentures was unheard of, but these unlikely descriptive bedfellows are now increasingly being fused together at Steven's clinics in Dudley, Wolverhampton and Kidderminster.

Evangelical about what new-generation denture prescriptions can achieve, Steven adds: "Dentures have traditionally never been associated with cosmetic makeovers, but our high-quality prosthetics have quite

literally taken years off some of our patients, reshaping smiles, sunken cheeks and pinched lips.

"Our teeth look real – the aesthetics and attention to detail for fit are astounding – and all prescriptions are functional too."

The current palette of solutions to deliver a more youthful, engaging smile has never been so great, with traditional prosthetics, implant-retained over-dentures and the most popular of inquiries – suction diaphragm dentures.

"Can dentures ever be glamorous?

Emphatically, yes," says Steven, who works hand-in-glove with practice implant surgeon, Dr Owain Rees BDS, DGD (UK) Dip IMP DENT (UCL), and North Street's general dentist, Polly Mineva (GDC 188090), a Doctor of Dental Medicine.

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- **Poor aesthetics** – The Denture Clinic is fastidious about the quality of its prosthetics and 'looking natural' has always been its hallmark.

- **Sore spots** – It's all about getting the fit perfect and with an on-site laboratory and cutting edge diagnostics, the clinic can ensure harmonious mating between gums and prescription.

- **Failing teeth** – Under one roof the surgical skill set covers nearly all eventualities, from simple fillings, endodontics (root fillings) to extractions and complex dental implant work.

- **Inability to eat properly** – Denture Clinic prescriptions are 'set' using a Biofunctional Prosthetics System (BPS) which helps with the accurate replication of natural teeth anatomy during the production process.

- **Aftercare** – Always high on the agenda. "We always give as much as the patients needs," says Steven.

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Alert as tricksters target the elderly

BOGUS callers claiming to be rat catchers, council workers and gardeners targeted seven homes in the Black Country in one day.

Police are warning residents to be on their guard against distraction burglars after the incidents in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

More than £500 was stolen from the house of an 87-year-old woman in Dudley after two men who claimed to be rat catchers searched the property.

On another occasion a man asked for £220 to repair a fence panel.

The bogus callers mainly target elderly residents in order to get access into their homes or ask for hundreds of pounds of cash to carry out simple jobs. It comes after reports of similar incidents in Cannock and Walsall.

Anyone with concerns should call police on 101 or in an emergency dial 999.



The Land Rovers drive on through the Cumbrian floods as students turned rescuers for stranded motorists

Off-road adventure trip turns into rescue mission

THEY decided to take a quick holiday to the Lakes – and ended up involved in the drama of floods caused by Storm Desmond.

Dave Round, aged 20, from Dudley, was among a group of youngsters who helped rescue vehicles trapped in rising flood waters in atrocious weather conditions.

Members of the Harper Adams University off-road team were on an unofficial trip to the Lakes, where they planned to spend the weekend driving along unsurfaced roads.

But due to the flooding in Cumbria they spent more than four hours rescuing fellow drivers.

One of the students – Paige Ma-

ther, aged 19 – said: “One of our members is on placement at Grange over Sands, so we were staying with her.”

“On Saturday we were just getting into Windermere when we started to see lots of flooding. Then we stopped and came across a man in a Volkswagen stuck in the middle of the flood.”

Jack Thorman, 21, from Shrewsbury, added: “We got him out of this mini-lake, undid the air filter and saw that he had water in his air intake. He asked if we could tow him back to his hotel, so I took him to Bowness and the others continued to save more people. One car contained a whole family including a baby.”

Police base front desks down from 48 to ten

NEARLY 80 per cent of West Midlands police station front desks have closed in the last seven years, new figures reveal.

The number of stations open to the public plummeted from 48 to just 10. Some sites have either already closed completely, or are set to shut.

Over the next five years, 28 police buildings will close to save £8.6 million through property sales and running costs.

Already axed are front desks at Dudley, Halesowen, Old Hill, Quinton, Sedgley and Stourbridge.

Campaigners have battled the closures, arguing officers need a visible presence in communities. But police bosses insist fewer people than ever are actually using the front desks, meaning it is not cost-effective.

Just four stations in the Black Country remain open to the public — Brierley Hill, Bloxwich, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton Central.

The biggest reduction came in the last year, when the number of front desks dropped from 41 to 10.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin led a campaign to keep the town's station open to the public, presenting a 2,200-name petition to Parliament but the station is still earmarked to close completely under the latest round of cuts.

Savings

He said: “We all know savings have to be made but these closures and the loss of thousands of officers are a direct result of the Government's decision to hand West Midlands Police disproportionate cuts that are twice as deep as places like Dudley.”

Sites in Netherton, Heath Town, Graiseley, and The Tanhouse Centre in Great Barr will close completely in January.



Dudley North MP Ian Austin

Dudley station will go next August, with Halesowen due to close in January 2017. Stourbridge station will shut its doors in May 2017, followed by the Kingswinford police base in July 2017.

James Morris, MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, said the force needed to ‘get its priorities straight’. He added: “West Midlands Police need to spend their money more effectively to provide a proper neighbourhood policing service which people can rely on and trust in.”

West Midlands Police spokeswoman Joanne Hunt said: “The decision to close front offices has not been taken lightly and followed a year-long review speaking to our communities to gain a detailed understanding of the service we provide and thoroughly analysing footfall.”

“Like all other forces, we have to continue to reduce spending and ensure taxpayers' money is spent on the services which matter to them most.”

Pub creates 45 jobs

A PUB restaurant chain has opened a new site in Dudley, creating 45 jobs.

The new Harvester is at the former Boston Little pub, on Castlegate park, off Tipton Road.

It is open after a four-week closure when a recruitment drive was undertaken.

It now has the capacity for more than 150 customers.

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Fun is all around in Marti's magic role

BIRMINGHAM Hippodrome's spectacular pantomime Aladdin is a star-studded extravaganza that bills itself as not only the Midlands' best panto but Britain's biggest!

This year's glittering line-up stars Wet Wet Wet singer Marti Pellow as Abanazar, Julian Clary as the Slave of the King, and West End star Lee Mead as Aladdin. Returning by popular demand is funnyman Matt Slack, this time as Wishee Washee, and Andrew Ryan plays the Dame for the 25th time as Widow Twankey.

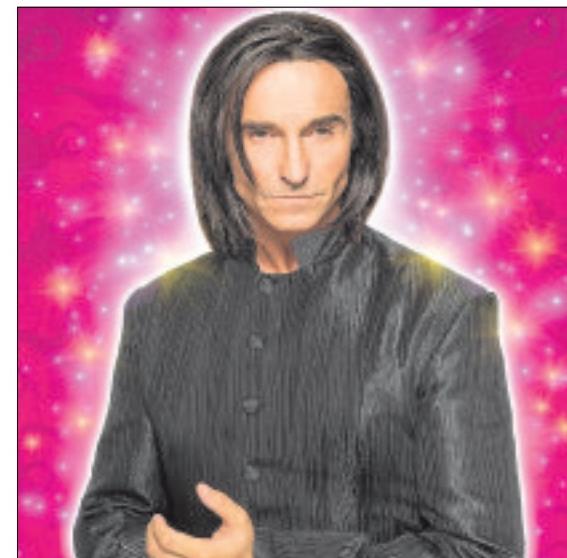
The show is packed with sensational special effects including a magical 3D flying carpet ride, laugh-out-loud comedy, and an Aladdin's cave of lavish sets and costumes.

Julian Clary is an old hand at the panto format. He was at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre last year and will raise laughs with his double entendres.

For Pellow it will be a new experience, but he said he didn't think twice when asked to star, saying: "I have this thing at the end of each year when a lot of my friends in the theatre tell me they're off to do a panto."

"I've never done one before, it had never been on my list. I remember panto as a kid and I loved it; that was in the days of Stanley Baxter."

"Then I was approached by Michael Harrison, the MD of Qdos. We'd worked together on The Witches of Eastwick. He said I'd be perfect for the part of Abanazar. The pantos that Michael put on are all 'wow'. So, to be part of it is a no-brainer."



Pellow talk — 1980s pop star turns panto villain in Brum's big panto show

"I've not been to a panto since my youth. But those memories from my youth were phenomenal. I would be right up at the back at the King's Theatre (Glasgow) and they were magic. It was total escapism. That's

the beauty of theatre, that's the beauty of the story of Aladdin."

Aladdin opens on Saturday and continues until January 31. See www.birminghamhippodrome.com or call 0844 338 5000.



Carols and the classics

NO venues throw themselves more wholeheartedly into the Christmas spirit than Birmingham Town Hall and Symphony Hall. Guest hosts including Alan Titchmarsh and Aled Jones (pictured left) will lead the festivities as the city concert venues host a feast of carols and seasonal classical music.

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's Festive Favourites concerts are as much a part of Brum's celebrations as the German Market and the Hippodrome panto. TV personality Alan Titchmarsh is the guest host for three evening concerts on Friday, Sunday and Monday, plus a 3pm matinee on Sunday. Conducted by Simon Halsey and joined by CBSO associates, this will be a joyous start to the season.

On Saturday at Symphony Hall it's Christmas with Aled Jones as the Welsh singer and presenter leads carols backed by the City of Birmingham Choir and London Concert Orchestra, and special guests. Ghost stories are traditional at this time of year and on Sunday Clive Andrews recreates the night at the Town Hall in December 1853 when Charles Dickens himself read A Christmas Carol to a spellbound audience.

Jonathan Cohen leads a Christmas Carol Singalong at Symphony Hall on Monday at 2.30pm, joined by special guest West End star Louise Dearman. It's Carols by Candlelight when the Mozart Festival Chorus and Orchestra, in period costume, perform on Tuesday evening. White Christmas on Wednesday is a feast of festive music featuring singers Jacinta Whyte and Tim Howard with Capital Voices and London Concert Orchestra at Symphony Hall. The orchestra returns at 2.30pm the next day for Christmas Eve Classics with Birmingham Choral Union and Four Oaks Cluster Choir.

To book see www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 345 0600.

West End performer returns with concert

A FORMER amateur performer from Lichfield who has found success on the London stage is returning to the West Midlands for a special show.

Cameron Sharp, who now lives in London, has appeared in the hit musical Rock of Ages in the West End and on tour but tomorrow (Fri) returns home with an evening of swing, soul and musical theatre tunes at the Arena Theatre in Wolverhampton. He will be accompanied by an 18-piece band, The Infinity Jazz Orchestra. Guest singers and friends will also join him for a performance that's also likely to include some festive sparkle.

Tickets are £18, call 01902 321321.

Justin is back for a brand new Purpose

TEEN pop sensation Justin Bieber has announced two concert dates at Birmingham city centre's Barclaycard Arena next autumn.

The Canadian singer will be performing at the venue on October 17 and 18 with tickets starting from £56.95 (plus fee) up to £135.70.

Tickets were going on general sale from 9am today (Thursday, December 17) from www.theticketfactory.com website.

The 21-year-old star has reached the no1 chart spot in more than 100 countries with his new album Purpose, featuring the massive hit song What Do You Mean.

Blast Off with the Neds at Civic gig

ONE of the best party atmospheres is likely to be at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Saturday when Stourbridge band Ned's Atomic Dustbin have organised the inaugural Kill Your Television Festival, and will play their first new song in 21 years.

The Neds have performed numerous sell-out shows at the venue in recent years. Frontman Jonn Penney said: "Ever since we reformed with all five original members in 2006 we have entertained the idea of writing new songs." The gig will also feature The Wedding Present, The Primitives and Eat, plus a return for legendary indie club night Blast Off.

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CHOICE



Claudia Winkleman

Strictly Come Dancing Grand Final

(BBC1, 6.35pm)

The four couples gather one last time for the 2015 Grand Final. Tensions are high as the celebrities and their partners face yet more turns on the dance-floor. Tonight, the contestants will be hoping the judges will be kind with more than just their scores, as Len Goodman, Darcey Bussell, Craig Revel Horwood and Bruno Tonioli will also be deciding which of the stars' previous routines will be revisited in the first of tonight's dances. For the second performance, the duos must dazzle both the panel and the audience at home with their 'show dance'. Once all eight routines are complete, the phone lines will open, giving viewers a chance to decide which of the competitors will be progressing through to the final three.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.** **10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live.** 11.30 James Martin – Home Comforts at Christmas. (R) **12.00 BBC News:** Weather. **12.10 Football Focus.**
- 12.55** *Saturday Night Takeaway* 12.00. (TV) **1.00 Film:** The Muppets (2011) Comedy, starring Jason Segel. **3.30 The Hunt.** (R) **4.30 Final Score.** 5.25 BBC News. **5.35 Regional Programme.** 5.45 Pointless Celebrities.
- 6.35 Strictly Come Dancing Grand Final.** The remaining four couples gather one last time for the 2015 Grand Final. Tensions are high as, after 13 weeks of performances, the celebrities and their partners face yet more turns on the dance-floor. Tonight, the contestants will be hoping the judges will be kind with more than just their scores, as Len Goodman, Darcey Bussell, Craig Revel Horwood and Bruno Tonioli will also be deciding which of the stars' previous routines will be revisited in the first of tonight's dances. For the second performance, the duos must dazzle both the panel and the audience at home with their 'show dance'. Once all eight routines are complete, the phone lines will open, giving viewers a chance to decide which of the competitors will be progressing through to the final three.
- 8.00 Casualty.** Christmas Eve arrives, and a nervous Cal goes to meet his birth mother. Meanwhile, Dixie learns her superiors are investigating Jess's complaint.
- 8.50 The National Lottery Live.** Frankie Bridge of The Saturdays joins Ore Oduba to push the Lotto button as the all-important winning numbers are revealed.
- 9.00 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.** The final three couples revisit their favourite routines in one last round of performances, before viewers decide which star should be named the champion. Last in the series.
- 10.20 BBC News: Weather.**
- 10.30 Match of the Day.** Highlights of the latest games, including Manchester United v Norwich City and Everton v Leicester City; National Lottery Update.
- 11.55 The Apprentice.** The five remaining candidates must face the interview process. (R)
- 12.55 Weather for the Week Ahead.** 1.00 BBC News.

BBC2

- 6.00 Race to Super Bowl 50.** (R) **6.50 Homes Under the Hammer.** (R) **7.45 Africa's Fishing Leopards: Natural World.** (R) **8.45 Film:** Underdog. (2007) **10.00 Film:** Bridge to Terabithia. (2007) **11.30 Escape from Camp Crystal Lake.** (1980) Christmas Bonanza Ever. **12.45 Film:** The Bishop's Wife. (1947) Fantasy, starring Cary Grant. **2.30 Film:** Splash! (1984) Romantic fantasy comedy, with Tom Hanks and Daryl Hannah. **4.10 Flog It!** **5.00 Film:** Dad's Army. (1971) British comedy, starring Arthur Lowe.
- 6.35 The Perfect Morcambe & Wise Christmas Special.** Compilations each featuring a selection of classic sketches and routines from the comedy duo's shows. (R)
- 7.05 Japan: Earth's Enchanted Islands.** Life on Japan's northernmost island Hokkaido, a place where tough animals and ingenious people have adapted to the extremes of the seasons. Last in the series. (R)
- 8.05 Porridge.** Mackay and Barracough discover Fletcher is making booze in his cell and the crafty con seems content to spend Christmas in solitary. Festive special from 1976, with Ronnie Barker. (R)
- 8.50 Rudolf Nureyev – Dance to Freedom.** Dramatised documentary detailing the story of Rudolf Nureyev, the Soviet ballet dancer who defected to the West in 1961, becoming a living legend in the process. Bolshoi Ballet Star Artem Ovcharenko steps into Nureyev's shoes, re-creating the Kirov Ballet company's 1961 European tour, which provided the dancer with the opportunity to defect at Paris's Le Bourget airport on June 16.
- 10.20 OI XL.** Jonny Vegas and Bill Bailey join regular panelist Alan Davies for an extended edition of the quiz show, in which host Stephen Fry offers up seasonal merriment.
- 11.05 The Rise of James Brown: Mr Dynamite.** Documentary charting the singer's journey from impoverished beginnings to becoming one of the biggest names in music, and revealing his pivotal role in the civil rights movement. (R)
- 12.45 Film:** SoulBoy. (2010) Drama, starring Martin Compston, Felicity Jones and Nichola Burley. **2.05 This Is BBC Two.**

ITV

- 6.00 CITV:** Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25 Pat & Stan.** (R) **6.30 Pat & Stan.** (R) **6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **7.00 Signed Stories:** Share a Story. (R) **7.05 Oddballs.** (R) **7.25 Stig of the Dump 4.** (R) **7.40 Mr Bean: The Animated Series.** (R) **7.50 Mr Bean: The Animated Series.** (R) **8.00 The Aquabats! Super Show!** (R) **8.30 Thunderbirds Are Go.** **9.00 Jessie.** **9.25 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **9.20 The Jeremy Kyle Show.** (R) **11.20 ITV News:** Weather. **11.30 Film:** The Mirror Crack'd. (1980). **1.35 Celebrity Squares.** (R) **2.15 Doc Martin.** (R) **3.15 Midsummers Murders.** (R) **5.10 Regional Programme:** Weather. **5.20 ITV News:** Weather. **5.35 Keep It in the Family Christmas Special.**
- 6.35 Film:** The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey. (2012) Unassuming hobbit Bilbo Baggins is pulled out of his comfortable life when Gandalf the wizard volunteers him for a dangerous quest. He joins a party of dwarves who are on a mission to reclaim their lost homeland, which has been taken over by a dragon. The first part of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on J.R.R. Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen and Richard Armitage.
- 9.45 The Jonathan Ross Show.** The host is given yet another chance to indulge his geek side as he welcomes Harrison Ford to take a seat on the sofa. The veteran Hollywood star lets no doubt face a barrage of questions about the making of the highly anticipated Star Wars: The Force Awakens, which hit cinemas on Thursday last week. Also visiting the studio are David Walliams, who is fronting Channel 4's countdown of the nation's favourite children's book this festive season, and Jamie Oliver, whose health-oriented recipe book Everyday Super Food hit shelves back in August. Plus, singer-songwriter Jess Glynne performs.
- 10.50 ITV News:** Weather.
- 11.05 Film:** Notting Hill. (1999) A London bookshop owner falls for a glamorous Hollywood film star, but intrusive media interest makes for a tricky relationship. Romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant, Julia Roberts, Rhys Ifans and Emma Chambers.
- 1.20 Jackpot247.** **3.00 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA.** (R) **3.40 ITV Nightscreen.**

CHANNEL 4

- 6.15 Great Ethiopian Run 2015.** **7.10 Survival of the Fittest.** **7.35 Snowman Triathlon.** **8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **9.00 The Normal Unit.** **10.30 The Big Blue Theory.** (R) **10.30 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **11.30 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **12.00 The Simpsons.** (R) **12.30 The Simpsons.** (R) **1.00 The Simpsons.** (R) **1.30 Channel 4 Racing.** Live coverage from Ascot and Haydock Park. **4.00 Channel 4 News:** 4.10 The Simpsons. (R) **4.40 The Simpsons.** (R) **5.10 Film:** Arthur Christmas. (2011) Animated comedy, with the voice of James McAvoy.
- 7.00 The World's Weirdest Weather.** Featuring geysers erupting in the middle of a city, clouds that look like they have been cut with a razor, red rainbows, zombie trees and bridges struck by strong winds that so fierce the structures start to wobble.
- 8.00 Film:** Star Trek. (2009) The trainee crew members of the starship Enterprise embark on their maiden flight, which pits them against a Romulan commander from the future who is planning a horrific revenge on those he blames for a tragedy in his own time. Sci-fi adventure based on the original TV series, starring Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto, Eric Bana, Zoe Saldana and Leonard Nimoy.
- 10.30 Film:** Watchmen. (2009) At the height of the Cold War, former superheroes discover a conspiracy when one of their number is murdered. Comic-book drama, starring Patrick Wilson and Jackie Earle Haley.
- 1.30 TFI Friday Christmas Special.** Chris Evans is joined by co-host Alan Partridge. Guests include James Corden, Jack Whitehall and Lee Mack, and there is music by Sir Tom Jones, Bryan Adams and Lianne La Havas. (R) **2.55 Hollyoaks.** Omnibus. While Porscha encourages Ollie to go to the police, Linda and Mercia's drinking habit to her advantage, and Gabe and Darren are shocked when Charlie starts talking. (R) **5.05 Hugh's 3 Good Things.** The chef creates dishes using nuts. Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall uses walnuts to make baklava, accompanied by ricotta and honeycomb with hazelnuts stirred in. (R) **5.20 Hugh's 3 Good Things: Best Bites.** Cooking with chocolate. (R) **5.25 Location, Location, Location.** Couples search for their ideal properties. (R)

CHANNEL 5

- 6.00 Milkshake!** **8.55 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** **9.30 The Saturday Show.** **11.30 Film:** A Country Christmas Story. (2013) **1.20 Film:** This Christmas. (2007) **2.00 Family drama,** starring Delroy Lewis. **3.30 Film:** The Christmas Carol. (2009) **4.00 Comedy drama,** starring Karl Hawker. **5.10 Film:** A Boyfriend for Christmas. (2004) **5.30 Romantic drama,** starring Kelli Williams.
- 6.55 Crackers About Christmas.** Eccentric people who are always in the festive holiday spirit, including a man who celebrates Christmas every day and whose daily routine includes posting himself cards, breakfasting on mince pies and sherry, wrapping and opening presents, dining with guests on roast turkey and watching the Queen's speech. Plus, a woman whose home is full of Christmas baubles, and a man who has set up his own school for Santas. (R)
- 7.55 Michael Bublé's Christmas Songbook.** The Canadian crooner sings Christmas classics, joined on stage in Vancouver by Rod Stewart, Blake Shelton, Carly Rae Jepsen, Elmo and Oscar the Grouch. (H)
- 8.55 5 News Weekend.**
- 9.00 Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's matches, including Brighton & Hove Albion v Middlesbrough and Rotherham v Hull. (R) **1.00 The Championship.** Plus, the goals from Leagues One and Two. **2.00 Match of the Month.** Includes Coventry City v Oldham Athletic and Hartlepool United v Plymouth Argyle. There is also a round-up of the main talking points, and interviews with a selection of players and managers.
- 10.30 Britain's Favourite Abba Songs.** A countdown of the Swedish pop group's 20 most popular songs, with celebrity fans including Jane McDonald and Liz McClarnon introducing their favourite clips.
- 11.55 Abba: Live in Concert.** The Swedish band in concert during their six-night residence at London's Wembley Arena in November 1979, featuring hits including Voulez-Vous, Dancing Queen and Waterloo. (R)
- 1.10 SuperCasino.** **3.10 Meet the Psychopaths.** **4.00 Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole.** (R) **4.50 Make It Big.** (R) **5.45 Angels of Jarm.** (R)

DIGITAL

- BBC Three**
- 7.00 Don't Tell the Bride** **8.00 Top Gear** Botswana Special. **9.00 Film:** Enemy of the State (1998) **11.05 Family Guy** **1.20 The Mighty Boosh**
- BBC Four**
- 7.00 Empire of the Seas:** How the Navy Forged the Modern World **8.00 The Golden Age of Steam Railways** **9.00 The Bridge** **11.10** **10 Things You Didn't Know About Earthquakes** **12.00 10 Things You Didn't Know About Tsunamis**
- ITV2**
- 11.20 Scorpion** **12.15 Funniest Ever You've Been Framed!** **1.15 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **3.10 Film:** Santa Baby (2006) **5.00 Merry Christmas** **Mr Bean** **5.35 Film:** Ella Enchanted (2004) **7.25 Film:** Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993) **9.00 Film:** The Bourne Supremacy (2004) **11.00** **Celebrity Juice:** Best Bits 2015 Part 1 **11.45** **Through the Keyhole** **1.15 Tricked** **2.10 Viral Tap** **2.45 Film:** Baby Mama (2008) **4.25** **The Almost Impossible Gameshow**
- ITV3**
- 11.50 Film:** Swallows and Amazons (1974) **1.15** **By Royal Appointment** **2.50 Film:** The Queen (2006) **4.50** **Columbo: It's All in the Blood** (1993) **6.55 Film:** Rosemary & Thyme **8.00 Housewife, 49** **10.00 Lewis** **12.05 A Touch of Frost** (1984) **1.20 Film:** Police Academy (1988) **2.20 Film:** Police Academy (1984) **2.15 Film:** Quadrophenia (1979) **E4**
- 12.05 Storage Wars: New York** **1.05 Storage Wars: Texas** **2.05 Film:** Johnnypawpaw Johnson (1972) **4.20** **Fifth Gear** **5.20 Formula E: Stand of the Future** (2016) **6.00** **Live FIA Formula E Championship:** The Punta del Este ePrix. **8.30 Film:** Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) **10.15 Film:** Rambo III (1988) **12.20 Film:** Police Academy (1984) **2.15 Film:** Quadrophenia (1979) **Film4**
- 11.00 Arriety** (2010) **1.00 A Knight's Tale** (2001) **3.40 The Longest Day** (1962) **7.10 Men in Black II** (2002) **9.00 Life of Pi** (2012) **11.25 WolfCop** (2014) **1.00 Thirst** (2009) **3.45 Close**

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CHOICE

Kara Tointon
The Sound of Music Live! (ITV, 7.30pm)

You can't beat a bit of The Sound of Music at Christmas - the film version is sure to pop up in the schedules at some point, but ITV is really pushing the boat out by launching a live version of the musical to help celebrate the movie's 50th anniversary. Perhaps the biggest surprise is the identity of the lead actress - Kara Tointon, who plays novice nun-turned-governess. We know she can act and her dance skills were revealed when she won Strictly Come Dancing in 2010, but can she sing? We'll find out tonight when she takes to the stage alongside West End and Downton Abbey star Julian Ovenden, who portrays Captain Von Trapp. Katherine Kelly, Alexander Armstrong and Mel Giedroyc also appear.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.** 7.35 Match of the Day. (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Baroness Brady. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Film: Rock of Gibraltar. (R) **2.00** (2012) Animated adventure, with the voices of Chris Pine, 2.40 Merry Madagascar. (R) **3.05** Film: Toy Story 3. (2010) Animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. **4.45** The Christmas Big Sing. **5.25** BBC News. **5.40** Regional Programme. **5.50** Countryfile: Cornish Coastal Christmas. **6.50** Sports Personality of the Year 2015. Gary Lineker, Clare Balding and Gabby Logan present this year's ceremony live from the SSE Arena in Belfast, where the successor to Lewis Hamilton will be crowned. Hamilton himself is among the 12 contenders, and will be hoping to land back-to-back wins at this ceremony, having delivered another Formula 1 world title in 2015 to maintain his recent dominance of the sport. The other nominees are world champion athletes Jessica Ennis-Hill, Mo Farah and Greg Rutherford, Davis Cup hero Andy Murray, tennis player Laura Robson, newly-crowned world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury, cyclists Chris Froome and Lizzie Armitstead, swimmer Adam Peaty, gymnast Max Whitlock and former Leeds Rhinos captain Kevin Sinfield - the first-ever candidate from rugby league. In addition, awards will be handed out in categories such as Team of the Year, Coach of the Year and Unsung Hero, and the Helen Rollason Award will be bestowed upon someone who epitomises courage and has the ability to inspire others.

- 9.00 The Apprentice.** The finalists must launch their business in the final task, including creating a brand and unveiling their campaign to an audience of industry experts. Last in the series. **11.00 BBC News.** **11.20 Regional Programme.** **11.30 Have I Got a Bit More News for You.** Compilation of the satirical quiz, looking back at the big news events of 2015, with team captains Ian Hislop and Paul Merton, and guest hosts and panelists. Last in the series. **12.10 Weather for the Week Ahead.** **12.15 BBC News.**

BBC2

- 6.15** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **7.15** Countryfile. **8.15** An Island Parish: Falklands. (R) **8.45** Natural World: Beavers Behaving Badly. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen: Best Bites. **11.15** Simply Nigella: Christmas Special. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Hi-de-Hi! (R) **1.45** Equestrian: Olympia. **4.30** Some Mothers Do Avail. (Em.) **5.20** Flog It!
- 6.25** **The Good Life.** Margo and Jerry are forced to spend Christmas with Tom and Barbara. Seasonal special from 1977. (R) **6.50** **Christmas University Challenge.** New series: Quizmaster Paxman chairs the first in a series of special festive editions of the quiz, with famous graduates of University College London and the University of Birmingham. **7.20** **To The Manor Born: 25th Anniversary Special.** Christmas revivial from 2007. Audrey prepares to celebrate her wedding anniversary, but finds the event threatened by secrets from her husband's past and her feckless nephew. (R) **8.20** **Film: Safe Haven.** (2013) Premiere. A woman trying to make a fresh start in a coastal town realises she must confront the dark past she is running from. Romantic drama, with Julianne Hough and Josh Duhamel. **10.10** **Live at the Apollo Christmas Special 2015.** Nina Conti hosts a special festive edition of the stand-up show featuring the Hammersmith Apollo, featuring Tony Daley, Hal Cruttenden and Josh Wadicomb. Last in the series. **10.55** **Family Guy.** Peter, Joe, Cleveland and Quagmire help throw Jesus an important birthday party. Animation following the misadventures of America's disaster-prone Griffin family. (R) **11.15** **The Javone Prince Show.** The actor pokes fun at the more ridiculous elements of modern life via stand-up performances, comedy sketches and music. (R) **11.45** **Country Stripe: Abz on the Farm.** Former boy band member Abz Love and his girlfriend Vicki Fallon try to start their own smallholding in Wales. (R) **12.45** **Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week.** (R) **2.15** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **3.15** Hobty City. (R) **4.15** James Martin – Home Comforts at Christmas. (R) **4.55** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

- 6.00** CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Santa Story. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.40** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **8.00** Lego DC Comics: Batman Be-Leaguered. (R) **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** FIA Formula E Championship. **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.20** ITV News: Weather. **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** The Unforgettable Dick Emery. (R) **1.00** Don Martin. **3.00** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.00** Tipping Point for Text Santa. (R) **6.00** **Regional Programme;** Weather. **6.15** ITV News: Weather. **6.30** **Jekyll and Hyde.** Robert has no wish to find the monster that is killing wealthy young men, but the trail is too compelling to resist. It leads him to a fight with a beautiful vampire who shocks him with the news that she's his sister, Olalla. She also tells him Dance is alive and being rebuilt by e creatures. Robert is suspicious of a trap and sets a test - if she can turn into a Jekyll he'll believe her. Fantasy adventure, tom Bateman and Wallis Day. **7.30** **The Sound of Music Live!** Popular musical The Sound of Music is brought to life on soundstages at London's Three Mills Studio, in a live TV dramatisation of the timeless tale of Maria and the von Trapp family. Based on the original, the drama will include classic songs such as How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria, Edelweiss, Do-Re-Mi, My Favourite Things, Climb Ev'ry Mountain, and the title song. Starring Kara Tointon, Julia Ovenden, Katherine Kelly and Alexander Armstrong. **10.05** ITV News: Weather. **10.20** **Film: Love Actually.** (2003) Interlinked tales of several people in search of love. Richard Curtis's romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant, Martine McCutcheon, Emma Thompson, Colin Firth, Bill Nighy and Liam Neeson. **12.45** Jackpot247. Interactive gaming. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. Text-based information service. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. Guests air their differences. (R)

CHANNEL 4

- 6.20** **The King of Queens.** (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Father. (R) **9.30** Still Game. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.25** Hachi: A Dog's Tale. (2009) Fact-based family drama, starring Richard Gere. **3.15** Film: The Addams Family. (1991) Black comedy, starring Anjelica Huston. **4.00** **Film: Home Alone.** (1990) A boy has to fend for himself when he is accidentally left behind after his family jets off to Paris for Christmas. The youngster initially enjoys his freedom, but is soon forced to resort to ingenious booby traps to defend the family home from two dim-witted burglars. Comedy, starring Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, Catherine O'Hara and John Candy. **8.00** **Bear Goes Wild with Barack Obama.** Bear Grylls is joined by the US president for his latest adventure. The pair go on a trek across the Alaskan wilderness, travelling through dense forest and glacial oceans, and visit the Exit Glacier. As they observe the effects of climate change first hand, along the way, they climb trees to gather berries and cook salmon on a campfire, sharing their thoughts on family, fears and faith. **9.00** **Homeland.** Carrie finds herself with a lead to follow. Penultimate episode of the fifth series of the thriller following a team of CIA agents battling terrorists and problems in their personal lives. Claire Danes stars. **10.00** **Gogglebox.** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R) **11.00** **Film: Four Christmases.** (2008) A couple struggle to make it through four family Christmases on the same day as they see each of their divorced parents in turn. Comedy, with Vince Vaughn and Reese Witherspoon. **12.40** **Film: Airplane!** (1980) Spoof disaster movie, starring Robert Hays. **2.10** Alan Carr: Chatty Man. (R) **3.05** The Undateables: Two Weddings and a Baby. (R) **3.55** Four in a Bed. (R)

CHANNEL 5

- 6.00** Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Tickle Toc. (R) **6.55** Zack and Quack. **7.05** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.15** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **7.25** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.40** Little Pig. (R) **7.50** Pig Ahoy! (R) **8.05** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.30** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.45** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **8.55** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.10** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football League Tonight. (R) **12.00** Film: Surf's Up. (2007) Animated comedy, with the voice of Jeff Bridges. **1.35** Film: The Christmas Switch. (2014) Fantasy, starring Brian Krause and Cedric Smith. **3.20** **Film: Christmas in the City.** (2013) Premiere. Drama, starring Ashley Williams. **5.05** Pinocchio. (1940) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Dick Jones. **6.45** **5 News Weekend.** **6.50** **Film: Hellboy II: The Golden Army.** (2008) The demon superhero, aided by a team from the Bureau of Paranormal Research and Defence, leads the fight against renegade elf Prince Nuada who is intent on reawakening an unstoppable robot army and bringing about the demise of mankind. Action fantasy sequel directed by Guillermo del Toro. Starring Ron Perlman, Selma Blair, Doug Jones and Luke Goss. Edited for language and violence. **9.00** **Film: War of the Worlds.** (2005) A divided father's rare weekend with his son ends when alien descends into horror when alien war machines rise from beneath Earth and begin to systematically destroy every human being in their path - leaving the man with the dangerous task of getting his kids to safety. Steven Spielberg's sci-fi thriller, based on HG Wells' novel, with Tom Cruise, Dakota Fanning, Justin Chatwin, Miranda Otto and Tim Robbins. **11.10** **Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs.** A countdown of songs guaranteed to make any Christmas party go with a swing, including classics by the Jackson 5, Joni Lewie, Band Aid, the Pogues and Kirsty MacColl, and Slade. (R) **2.05** **SuperCasino.** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming. **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R) **3.40** Close

DIGITAL

- BBC Three** **7.00** First Flight. **7.10** Film: G-Force (2009). **8.30** Don't Tell the Bride – Christmas on Ice. **9.30** Top Gear: Polar Challenge. **10.35** Russell Howard's Good News Extra. **11.15** Russell Howard's Good News Extra. **12.45** Josh. **1.15** The Mighty Boosh.

- BBC Four** **7.00** Blood and Gold: The Making of Spain with Simon Sebag Montefiore. **8.00** Westminster Abbey. **9.00** Nat King Cole: Afraid of the Dark. **10.30** Nina Simone & Me with Laura Mvula. **11.00** Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band: Live From The River Tour 1980

- ITV2** **11.45** Keep It in the Family Christmas Special. **12.50** You've Been Framed at Christmas. **1.20** Film: Peter Pan (2003). **3.30** Film: Beethoven's Christmas Adventure (2011). **4.15** Outrageous Christmas Special. **6.25** The X Factor Winner's Story. **7.30** You've Been Framed at Christmas. **9.00** Film: The Bourne Ultimatum (2007). **11.15** Celebrity Juice: Christmas Special. **12.00** Release the Hounds: Jingle Hell II. **1.05** Tricked (2008). **2.00** Film: Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant (2009).

- ITV3** **11.50** Film: Columbo: It's All in the Game (1993). **1.50** Film: Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (1971). **3.55** Clash of the Santas. **5.55** Michael Bublé: At Home for Christmas. **7.30** Lewis. **9.30** Inspector Morse. **11.45** A Touch of Frost. **1.50** Wyclef. **2.45** On the Buses. **3.10** ITV3 Nightscreen. **3.40** Emmerdale

- ITV4** **11.20** The Car Chasers. **11.50** Pawn Stars. **1.35** Film: No Name on the Bullet (1959). **3.15** Film: The Appaloosa (1966). **5.20** Film: Ice Cold in Alex (1958). **8.00** The Celebrity Chase. **9.00** Film: The Interpreter (2005). **11.40** Film: Tin Cup (1996). **2.25** Film: Spider (2002).

- E4** **12.30** Couples Come Dine with Me. **2.35** The Big Bang Theory. **6.25** Film: The Twilight Saga: New Moon (2009). **9.00** Film: The Inbetweeners 2 (2014). **11.00** Film: The Inbetweeners Go Global. **12.05** The Inbetweeners 2. **2.20** The Inbetweeners Go Global. **3.15** How to Be a Grown Up 3. **Film4** **11.00** Porco Rosso (1992). **1.00** Parental Guidance (2012). **3.05** Bride Wars (2009). **4.50** Evolution (2001). **6.50** Men in Black 3 (2012). **9.00** Iron Man 2 (2010). **11.25** Daredevil (2003). **1.30** Years (2011).

- 1.40** Close

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MONDAY

White Christmas, Channel 4, 11.50pm
Two nightclub entertainers stage a series of shows to save an old friend's winter resort with the help of a talented singing sister act. Musical, with Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye. (1954)

TUESDAY

Shrek the Third, BBC1, 3.50pm

The bad-tempered ogre finds himself in the unwelcome position of being next in line for the throne. Animated comedy, with the voices of Mike Myers, Cameron Diaz, Justin Timberlake, Eddie Murphy, Antonio Banderas and Rupert Everett. (2007)

WEDNESDAY

Bridget Jones's Diary, ITV, 10.45pm

A single woman begins a new year with resolutions to find love, quit her bad habits and take a step up the career ladder. Romantic comedy based on Helen Fielding's novel, starring Renée Zellweger, Hugh Grant and Colin Firth. (2001)



Bridget Jones's Diary, Wednesday, ITV, 10.45pm

CHRISTMAS EVE

It's a Wonderful Life, Channel 4, 2.15pm

AA suicidal small-town businessman is visited by an angel who tries to change his mind by showing him the good he has done. Fantasy drama, starring James Stewart and Donna Reed. (1946)

CHRISTMAS DAY

The Muppet Christmas Carol, Channel 4, 1.45pm

A miser is encouraged to mend his ways at Christmas when three spirits show him his past, present and what the future holds. Puppet comedy, with Michael Caine and Steven Mackintosh. (1992)
The Wizard of Oz, Channel 5, 3.10pm
Youngster Dorothy Gale is whisked over the rainbow by a tornado into the magical land of Oz, where she inadvertently kills a wicked witch – incurring the wrath of another. Setting out to find the wizard who can show her a way home, she is joined on her journey by a scarecrow, a tin man and a cowardly lion, who all hope their own wishes will be granted. Musical fantasy, with Judy Garland, Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, Bert Lahr and Frank Morgan. (1939)

Who do you think you are kidding Mr Hitler? Whenever the crusty old voice of Bud Flanagan can be heard singing that line, you know that Dad's Army is about to start and what will follow is approximately 25 minutes of mayhem, one-liners and catchphrases from Captain Mainwaring, Sergeant Wilson, Corporal Jones and the rest of the platoon.

Ah yes, those catchphrases... Even now, sentences such as, "You stupid boy," "I'm going to get you Napoleon," "We're doomed" and, of course, "Don't panic" are still well known – which is probably down to the fact that the Beeb always seems to be repeating the show.

It's actually been 47 years since the boys first donned their uniforms and 35 since they hung them up again, but those nine years in between were full of humour which hasn't dated one little bit.

There's an old saying for authors: Write what you know. Jimmy Perry proved he wasn't a "stupid boy" when he did just that, and, along with writing partner David Croft, turned his World

War Two Home Guard experiences into Dad's Army.

"We wrote the show together and it became this huge success," says Perry, with a hint of surprise still in his voice. "I always thought it was a good idea but it totally overwhelmed us. I think the secret was that everything was right. It was one of those rare things. The cast was right, the time and the subject was right."

However, not everybody was as enamoured with the idea – or the actors taking part – as Perry. And now, in this drama, viewers can learn more about how the sitcom was born and eventually made it to our screens against the odds.

The BBC has a good track record when it comes to producing 'making-of' dramas. *The Curse of Steptoe*, *The Road to Coronation Street* and *An Adventure in Space and Time* all received critical acclaim, so there's every reason to believe that the latest in the genre will be just as enthralling. The timing is good too – Dad's Army remains a mainstay of the BBC schedule and a revamped film version is due for release in February.

Paul Ritter and Richard Dormer play Perry and Croft respectively, and the drama takes us from when Perry had the initial idea in 1967 to the broadcast of the first episode a year later.

John Sessions and Julian Sands take the key roles of Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier; it's hard to imagine anybody playing the characters those venerable old actors took, but Captain Mainwaring was originally offered to Jon Pertwee, while Le Mesurier only accepted the role of Sgt Wilson because the series was going to be filmed in Norfolk, a county he loved.

Sadly, most of the original cast are no longer with us – only Ian Lavender and Frank Williams (*Private Pike* and *Rev Timothy Farthing* respectively) remain. Croft also passed away in 2011.

"I feel a tremendous sense of warmth and sadness that most of those involved are no longer with us," says Perry. "But I also have a sense of pride that I created such a show."

Sarah Alexander, Sally Phillips and Keith Allen also star.

MONDAY
The John Bishop Christmas Show
BBC1, 9pm

The Liverpudlian comedian returns for his third all-singing, all-dancing, festive extravaganza and is joined on stage at the Lyceum Theatre in London's West End by a selection of the most exciting names in music and comedy. The line-up features music from Australian pop star and actress Kylie Minogue, chart-topping singer-songwriter Jess Glynne and 2009 X Factor runner-up and TV presenter Olly Murs, while the laughs are supplied by comedians Sarah Millican, Danny Bhoy, Tom Allen and Andy Askins.

TUESDAY
Luther
BBC1, 9pm

With the eponymous detective dogged by ghosts from his past, a cold case might be the key to unlocking a mystery that's tormenting him. Meanwhile, with the cannibalistic serial killer still at large, Benny's hacking skills have revealed a list of hundreds of potential victims. Realising it's all part of a macabre end game, the crime buster is forced to put himself and new colleague Emma into the heart of danger to try and stop the killer. Idris Elba and Laura Haddock head the cast.

WEDNESDAY
Prey
ITV, 9pm

As Murdoch continues with the search for his daughter, he is forced into one last extraordinary mission before Lucy can be freed. But, as a wanted man, it is a near-impossible task, and he must fight to get her to safety before the relentless Reinhardt catches her prey. Concluding instalment of the thriller, following the story of a prison officer who is forced on the run with a young female

prisoner when his daughter is kidnapped. Starring Philip Glenister, Rosie Cavaliero, MyAnna Buring and Nathan Stewart-Jarrett. Last in the series.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Peter Kay: 20 Years of Funny

BBC1, 9.05pm
It is nearly 20 years since Peter Kay was named North West Comedian of the Year 1996, beating the likes of Johnny Vegas to the title at a show hosted by Dave Spikey. This one-off hour-long programme looks back at the much-loved comedian and actor's life from his childhood growing up in Bolton, to the places and people who have influenced him. It reveals how Peter began his journey into the world of comedy and his eventual rise to become a household name, playing to a record-breaking 1.2 million fans on his *The Tour That Doesn't Tour*.

Prey, Wednesday, ITV, 9pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

Downton Abbey – The Finale
ITV, 8.45pm

Julian Fellowes bids farewell to the Crawleys with one last festive special, catching up with the Abbey's residents at the tail-end of 1925. Many endeavours to build bridges, but Edith's secret continues to pose a threat. As Henry settles into the role of husband, scars left by Charlie's death are slow to heal, while Carson struggles to come to terms with developments that prove even he is not invulnerable to change. Spratt's moonlighting venture is threatened by the conniving of Denker, and Daisy may have missed her chance with an admirer.

Our Cilla

ITV, 10.45pm

The death of singer and TV presenter Cilla Black in August 2015 shocked the showbusiness community. In this programme, stars including Ringo Starr, Cliff Richard, Elaine Paige, Christopher Biggins, Paul O'Grady and Lynda La Plante join members of the entertainer's family and other close friends to reveal the woman behind the screen persona. Alongside rare interviews and archive footage, the candid, humorous and surprising insights of the people who knew her best chart the journey of a woman who broke boundaries, both in terms of class and gender.

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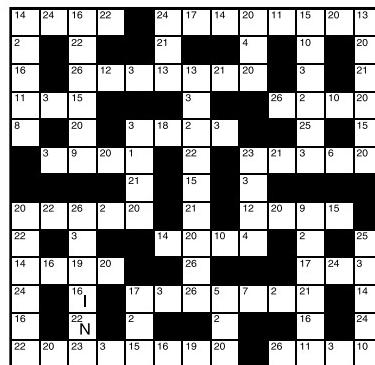
We're Doomed! The Dad's Army Story, Tuesday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

BRAIN GYM No.356

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	F	M	Q	B	P	G	R	E	X	H	D	L	A
14	I	K	C	N	Z	W	O	Y	I	T	S	U	V

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

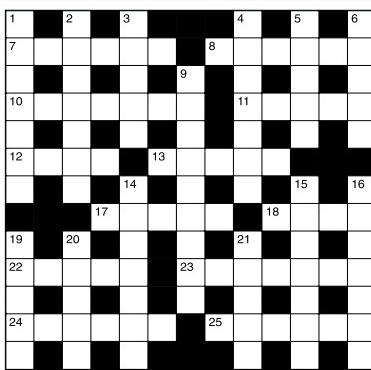
Cryptic Clues:

Across

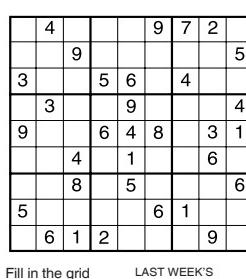
7. Make it possible to be lean? (6)
8. This stuff does have importance (6)
10. The team having batted are not in the pavilion (7)
11. Dodge a chasm (5)
12. Not one of the nonentities (4)
13. Filched a wrap (5)
17. Famous king was dunderhead - and greedy (5)
18. See 2 Down
22. Stale to the smallest degree (5)
23. Letters for sending to detached fort? (7)
24. Street abounding with contention (6)
25. His products presumably have the edge (6)

Down

1. About hearty echo (7)
- 2 & 18 Ac. By which the chairman sees the actors are elected? (7,4)
3. It's clear learner is in distress (5)
4. Competent enough to do better than clever people (7)
5. Was a candidate, but didn't have a seat (5)
6. She's out of the singles now (5)
9. His trial goes over one's head (4,5)
14. Dog finds mother unyielding (7)
15. Spectacle? (7)
16. Correspondence from landlords? (7)
19. Those who study social division (5)
20. Annoy Henry (5)
21. A drink for the overweight? (5)
25. Glad (6)



Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >
5 4 3 1 6 7 9 8 2
2 9 7 4 3 8 6 5 1
1 6 8 5 2 9 3 4 7
9 3 2 6 8 5 1 7 4
8 1 5 3 4 6 2 9 7
7 4 9 6 8 3 5 1 6
6 2 4 8 7 1 9 3 5
3 5 1 9 4 6 7 2 8
8 7 9 2 5 3 4 1 6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Backs; 4 Pulls up; 8 Air one's 9 Views; 10 Toot; 11 Pickling; 13 Cuff; 14 Pool; 16 Obedient; 17 Esau; 20 Naomi; 21 Servant; 22 Settled; 23 Wages; Down: 1 Beat the bounds; 2 Cargo; 3 Sink; 4 Pistil; 5 Love-knot; 6 Special; 7 Post-graduates; 12 Official; 13 Cherrypick; 15 Pised; 18 Slanted; 19 Grow; 20 JUICE - Across: 1 Open; 4 Dope; 5 Snug; 6 Miss; 9 Amiss; 10 Chef; 11 Dominie; 13 Eros; 14 Just; 16 Nauseous; 17 Main; 20 Bravo; 21 Inexact; 22 Element; 23 Dread; Down: 1 Objectioneer; 2 Evade; 3 Noon; 4 Despot; 5 Spacious; 6 Evident; 7 Discriminated; 12 Lose hope; 13 Emulate; 15 Quaint; 18 Aware; 19 Herd.

Thinking space



Quiz

1. Which Biblical book mentions 'A land flowing with milk and honey'?
2. In which Shakespeare play does Caliban appear?
3. In which year did Canada adopt a maple leaf emblem for its flag?
4. Which Nazi leader was 'The Butcher of Lyon'?
5. How old was outlaw Clyde Barrow when he died?
6. When is the first day of Ramadan in 2016?
7. Who wrote Northanger Abbey?
8. To which country did Alexander Graham Bell emigrate in 1870?
9. What nationality was composer Dvorak?
10. With which of the arts would you associate Sir Alfred Munnings?

Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 Swan-upping; 2 David Copperfield; 3 Egypt; 4 A church; 5 Hyde Park; 6 A bird; 7 Alcazar; 8 Torino; 9 George Harrison; 10 Poland.

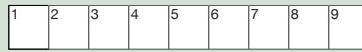
Niner:

LEGATIONS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

2467 gives a school,
98457 gives a school subject,
1352732 gives another school subject.



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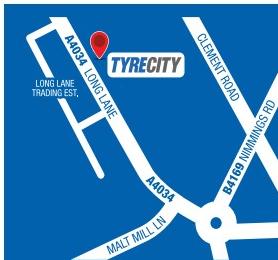
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Extended family home in a sought-after area



THIS extended detached family home in Howley Grange Road, Halesowen, is in a sought-after area.

It is for sale through Taylors at £299,950. With gas central heating and double glazing, it comprises an entrance porch, a hall, a study/playroom, lounge/diner with a feature fire surround and gas fire. The kitchen comes with a built-in double oven and gas hob with stainless steel cooker hood and built-in dishwasher, utility, a conservatory, downstairs WC, four double bedrooms, a family bathroom, rear garden and parking.

Contact Taylors on 0121 550 3978 or www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk



Traditional mid-terrace is ideal place to start



SITUATED in the heart of Bearwood on Pargeter Road, this traditional mid-terrace is an ideal first time buy.

With period features and includes a stunning kitchen and a contemporary bathroom, it is for sale through Robert Oulsnam at £144,950 with no chain.

Bearwood is popular for its High Street amenities, Lightwoods Park, Warley Woods and golf course. It also has excellent transport links.

It has two double bedrooms with over stairs storage, two reception rooms with double opening doors to the rear and a feature bay window to the front, a utility, kitchen with double oven and gas hob, bathroom with a roll top bath and a telephone shower and an entrance hall.

For further information contact Robert Oulsnam on 0121 4299986 or visit www.oulsnam.net website.



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Halesowen Office Lettings & Property Management



NEW

BIRMINGHAM, Orion Building £800 pcm+fees
A fantastic opportunity to rent a fully furnished apartment in the heart of Birmingham City Centre. This 1 bed modern property overlooking the Mailbox features open plan living with 24 hour concierge service and secure underground parking (permit required), double glazed and electric heating. Viewings highly recommended. EPC: C



NEW

HALESOWEN, Wassell Road £795 pcm+fees
A lovely furnished to suit semi-detached house in central Halesowen which features: entrance porch, lounge, fully fitted kitchen with appliances, covered side entrance, private rear garden, 3 good size bedrooms, large bathroom with shower over bath, garage & driveway. Also benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing. EPC: TBC



NEW

KINGSWINFORD, Mount Pleasant £775 pcm+fees
Absolutely fantastic and not too missed. Within the catchment area for Glymne Primary School and Summerhill Secondary School. This huge semi-detached home has 2 reception rooms, large modern kitchen, 2 double bedrooms and 1 single bedroom, conservatory, downstairs WC. This property has recently undergone a full makeover. Viewing is essential to appreciate the size of this house. EPC: TBC



NEW

HALESOWEN, Huntington Crescent £750 pcm+fees
Centrally located to Halesowen. This immaculate property which is not to be missed features 4 good size bedrooms, 1 large reception room, fitted kitchen with dishwasher and fridge freezer, house bathroom with shower, conservatory, block paved driveway and garage. EPC: E



NEW PRICE

HALESOWEN, Long Lane £650 pcm+fees
A Victorian style semi-detached house in a very convenient & popular location. This lovely property has recently been refurbished and comprises of: entrance hall with Minton flooring, front dining room, lounge, fitted kitchen, utility room, 3 good sized bedrooms, bathroom with shower and rear garden. EPC: D



NEW

BRIERLEY HILL, Wychbury Road £650 pcm+fees
This lovely semi-detached house has been recently refurbished to a high standard & comprises of: hall, extended lounge & kitchen, dining room, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, tandem garage, front and rear gardens, central heating and double glazing. EPC: D



NEW

BRIERLEY HILL, Gayfield Avenue £650 pcm+fees
Superb modern re-decorated & newly carpeted 3 bedroom semi-detached house in this very popular estate (Village). It comprises of: entrance porch, lounge with fireplace, fitted kitchen with appliances, utility room, 3 good size bedrooms, bathroom with shower, driveway for 3 cars. Available now. EPC: C



NEW

HALESOWEN, Huntington Crescent £650 pcm+fees
Beautifully presented detached house in a well sought after location, comprising of: 3 bedrooms, large lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, downstairs WC, gas central heating, double glazing, parking to the front, detached garage at rear, front and rear gardens. A property not to be missed. EPC: D



NEW

HALESOWEN, Albert Road £600 pcm+fees
An immaculately presented detached house within minutes of Halesowen. A well sought after location, comprising of: 3 bedrooms, large lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, downstairs WC, gas central heating, double glazing, parking to the front, detached garage at rear, front and rear gardens. A property not to be missed. EPC: D



NEW

HALESOWEN, The Pumphouse £595 pcm+fees
Contemporary fully furnished luxury living. Generous size lounge with state of the art SKY+HD/TDAB chrome sockets, 1 double bedroom with fitted wardrobes, wall mounted LCD/DAB, stunning fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, beautiful bathroom with shower, electric central heating, allocated parking space with visitor spaces, secure ported access phone system. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: C



NEW

BARTLEY GREEN, Trimley Road £595 pcm+fees
Located in the Woodgate area ideally situated for Woodgate Primary School, this recently decorated 2 bedroom end terrace house features fitted kitchen, large lounge, house bathroom with shower, separate w.c., rear garden, driveway for several cars, EPC: TBC



NEW

HALESOWEN, Hagley Road £595 pcm+fees
A superb 2 bedroom flat in central Halesowen. This property has been fully refurbished to a very high standard and must be seen to be appreciated. Private secure entrance with alarm, large lounge, stunning kitchen/dining area with appliances, utility room/downstairs w.c., 2 bedrooms, shower room, rear courtyard. EPC: TBC



NEW

HALESOWEN, Waugh Drive £575 pcm+fees
Luxury living in Hayle Green. A superb 1st floor apartment offering spacious accommodation including fitted kitchen with appliances, lounge, 2 double bedrooms, triple double glazing to front of apartment, electric storage heating, allocated parking. Available Now. EPC: TBC



NEW

HALESOWEN, Colley Lane £575 pcm+fees
A superb location close to Merry Hill & Cradley Heath train station is this 2 bedroom semi-detached house comprising of: Hallway, lounge, refitted breakfast/kitchen with oven/hob, upstairs bathroom with shower, 2 bedrooms & further carpeted loft room, rear patio with astro turf & roller shutter door to parking area, patio doors leading to a rear garden, bathroom with shower and parking. EPC: D



NEW

CRADLEY HEATH, Victoria Gardens £575 pcm+fees
This modern home is in a sought after area for Old Hill train station, local shops and bus links. The house features 2 double bedrooms, spacious lounge with patio doors leading to a rear garden, bathroom with shower and parking. EPC: C



NATHERTON, St Georges Road £425 pcm+fees
Beautiful refurbishment in a quiet location. This 1st floor apartment has undergone a complete refurbishment. Features electric storage heating, living room, brand new kitchen, 1 very large double bedroom, brand new house bathroom with shower, rear garden, parking space. Viewing recommended to appreciate this nicely proportioned flat. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Apperley Way £425 pcm+fees
Located on a popular estate close to Merry Hill Shopping Centre. This 3 bedroom property features: large lounge, dining room, kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, 1 single, bathroom with shower over bath, low maintenance rear garden, communal parking area. Also benefiting from electric heating and double glazing. EPC: E



NEW

QUINTON, College Road £475 pcm+fees
Large flat available above a shop close to direct bus links to Birmingham comprising of lounge, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, 2 large double bedrooms plus extra study/storage room, white bathroom with shower, electric heating. Available Now. EPC: G

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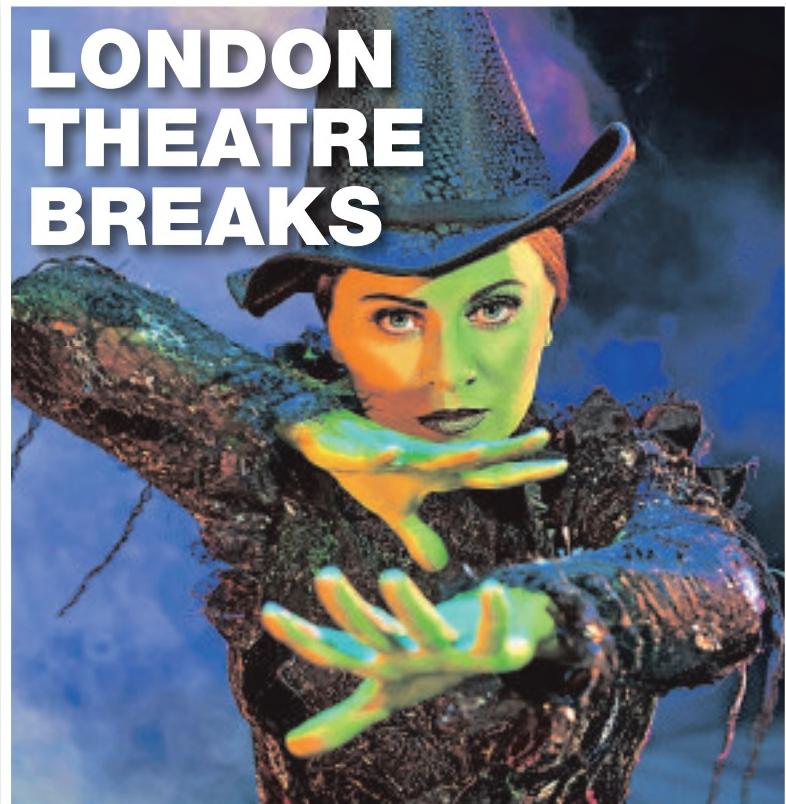
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DEF LEPPARD Whitesnake 2 tickets, Dec 13, Capital Arena Nottingham, Block 4, Row D, Seats 3&4 £100 for the pair. 01902 664628.

what's on

BOOK FAIR Kinver Comm Centre, Wed 16 December, Est 1797. Winter Fair. 01902 550 4120 - stall holder sold out at last event! Antique/coll fair, 3rd Jan.

antique fairs

IMAC 21.5 IS iMac 21.5ins i5 8Gb Ram 1TB HDD. Still under Warranty and eligible for AppleCare, £675. 07970 032604.

photography & camcorders

CANNON 40D complete with lenses and accessories, mint condition. £250 ono. 01902 887505.

kitchens & bathrooms

iPHONE 5C Unlocked, as new condition, all extras, plus box. £135. 01384 863305 or 07970 841177.

pc's, laptops & accessories

MAC 21.5 IS iMac 21.5ins i5 8Gb Ram 1TB HDD. Still under Warranty and eligible for AppleCare, £675. 07970 032604.

t.v. / home entertainment

HSL JEWEL motor riser recliner settee, as new, transport if required. £195. 01902 219101.

household appliances

FRIDGE FREEZER in excellent condition. £100. 01902 873463. Will deliver. Telephone 07340 911635.

items for sale

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

DOUBLE GLAZED windows, rosewood (brown), various sizes including french door, very good condition £275 ono. 07703 740356.

items wanted

A BEST CASH PRICE

FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS Any gauge or age

Horby / Bachmann / Bowmans / Roundhouse / Graham / Farish / any live steam. Also Die Cast, Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.

01384 836219/07891 713547. theretrainmaster67@hotmail.com

BRITISH COINS AND MEDALS wanted by private collector.

Please contact 01902 676540.

READERS ARE ADVISED TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER ALL OF THEIR OPTIONS BEFORE AGREEING TO THE SALE OF ANY OF THEIR ITEMS.

SPECTRUM GAMES wanted also any old crash magazines wanted. 01902 892918.

ADVERTISERS MUST NOT ADVERTISE FOR THIS SERVICE.

accommodation to let

A ONE BEDROOM flat in Shifnal for over 40's, Wednesfield Housing Association, 01952 463603.

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Consumer Protection Act 1983, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

DUDLEY 1-Bed Flat also furnished with all bills included. Kitchen & shower room. £675/£80 pmt. Maturity, DSS considered. 07550 002549.

FLAT TO LET Wolverhampton, 1-2 bed, CH, DSS welcome. Off road parking. 07718 896058.

MERRIDALE ROOM to let. £63pw inc most bill not to be overlooked!! DSS ok. Call 07723 016692.

TO LET Large bedsit Penn area, newly decorated, unfurnished, off road parking, deposit required, suit working person. 07486 379419.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

7 Jobs**full time - general**

**CARLTON CARE GROUP
GRANGE HILL HOUSE**
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COOK

We require a part time Cook,
7.30 a.m. - 2.00 p.m.
to cook quality home food for our residents
For further information please ring
0121 550 1312 or collect an application
form from reception

8 Motoring**cars over £1500**

ABARTH 500, grey, fsh, MoT, ideal first car, red leather interior, beautiful little car, £6,450. 07983 662141.

CITROEN C3 COOL
2007, 1.1 litre, 40,000 Miles, part service history, metallic grey, abs, electric windows, air bag, air con, long MoT, metallic paint, central locking, pas, CD £2,600 ono 07775710450

FORD FIESTA 1.4, 2003, 41,397 miles, diesel, met green, 5 door, e/w, e/m, c/l, air con, MoT, silvys, CD. Good condition. £1,700. 01902 742520.

JAGUAR S TYPE 2.7 TURBO DIESEL
Black, automatic, full leather, 55 plate, 90k miles, recent full service and MoT, one careful owner from new. Very good condition. £4,995 ono. 07740 418668.

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4 SXI, 2008, owned from new, 11 months MoT, very good condition. Silver/Met. 5dr 58k. £3,150. 07946 649446.

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Women seeking men

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

SAMANTHA, 42yrs, seeks gent for festive season, doesn't want to be along again. Age/looks unimportant, GSOH essential. Box: 4140774, Text only.

YVONNE, single mum, happy with life, but would like to meet someone to share fun times with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420269

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA: Tel No: 0906 510 3003 Box 419673

JACKIE lonely and looking for male company, 48-65. Need a bit of love and affection? Then I'm your girl, call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418169

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. Pls call, ACA: Tel No: 0906 515 3007 Box: 418167

LYN, 43, divorced very lonely single mum, young looking, slim, attractive. WLTM similar male for companionship. Age/looks/Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418795

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA: Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

SUSANNAH, 48, curvy female, romantic and cuddly, seeks similar kind male for a loving relationship with lots of cuddles and kisses. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417341

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs, seeks fun at her home. ACA: Tel: No: 0906 515 3015 Box: 405297

LUCY, 32, blonde, tall and slim, looking for a casual fling, nothing serious. Discretion needed and assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420237

SOPHIA young 40s, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

JANE, 47, voluptuous female, long hair, brown eyes, generous curves, would love to spend cosy nights in with that special male. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417985

CATHY, 42, good looking brunette with a real passion for life, seeking male for happy times, dates, chats, romance and more. Pls call, Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420175

TARA 22 tall slim but curly with legs that go all the way up to heaven, WLTM very appreciative, confident male for adult fun. Contact me anytime. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414701

FEMALE, dark haired 5'10, curvy, likes reading, walking, cinema, seeks male 40-50 for lasting relationship. Text only to Mailbox No: 5315901

PROFESSIONAL black female age 52, enjoys evenings and days out, would like to meet similar Midlands male. Text only to Mailbox No: 5315901

CHARLENE, 24, petite curvy young blonde seeks similar cheeky, fun loving guy for lots of fun and loving. ACA: Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419597

CATHY, 42, good looking brunettes with a real passion for life, seeking male for happy times, dates, chats, romance and more. Pls call, Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419597

SHARON 32, attractive black single mom of one, very tactile and passionate, WLTM male 45-65yrs for fun meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419579

MARIE, 43, fun blue-eyed blonde, fit and active, seeks similar male to have a laugh with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419417

KAREN 50, widow, likes swimming, horse riding, keep fit, play pigen shooting. GSOH, N/S, non drinker, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415211

CURVY, farm girl at heart, 32, 5ft 10, single mom, caring, kind, chatty likes walks, cooking WLTM tactile male farmer for LTR. Text only to Mailbox No: 5067001

FEMALE medium build, blonde hair, 5ft 5ins, seeks male, 50+, GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 514529

SENSUAL female, attractive female, long hair, blue eyes, loves travel, visiting/dining. WLTM genuine male for mutual companionship. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418587

JAN 35y old blue eyed blonde, outgoing, friendly, WLTM passionate guy to share good wine, good conversation, flirting and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418609

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, widow, 50's, likes walks, sight seeing, theatre, meals out, sees genuine, professional gent, 5ft 5ins plus to make life more enjoyable. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418615

JAN 35y old blue eyed blonde, outgoing, friendly, WLTM passionate guy to share good wine, good conversation, flirting and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418609

MALE 50's, 5ft 5ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, seeks gent with GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415871

BLUE eyed female, blonde hair, slim, GSOH, loving, caring, understanding, seeking similar male, 55-55. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416989

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunnette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418117

CAROL Ann, sensitive slim brunnette very romantic seeks tall handsome male for fun, friendship and lots of TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419385

KIRSTEN, 36, attractive, blonde and very bored, seeking open-minded decent male for fun/friendship, 40-60yrs. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419383

VAL 41, pretty, curly,防卫, seeks similar fun loving male for an uncomplicated no strings relationship. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416601

MID naughty turtles female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403109

DIVORCED female, attractive, sensual by nature, OAC, bore with own company, looking to make a life more exciting with like-minded mind. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419219

LINDA, 47, brown-eyed blonde, caring, loving and honest, many interests, seeks genuine male to share lonely evenings with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417211

JOYCE, affectionate sensitive widow, bit of a romantic, seeks loving male for lots of TLC. Looks unimportant, it's what's in the heart that matters. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419821

DEBBIE, 29, looking for mature professional guy, 40-50 to spend good times with. Call me, you have nothing to lose. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419075

FEMALE fun brunnette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416287

PAT 66, attractive, N/S, likes reading, nights out, seeks gent for friendship, days out and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418277

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SARAH, curvaceous blonde, 35, passionate nature, solvent, OHAC, WLTM, date again, looking for male to take me out. Looks/Age unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420207

FELICITY, 36yrs, attractive, petite but shapely lady seeks gent for indoor activities! Age/looks/marital status: unimportant but must be discreet and non demanding. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 420235

KELLY young attractive vivacious 48y old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc., WLTM male for mutual companionship Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420195

SARAH 39, single Mom, knows the benefit of having a good man in the picture. Text only to Mailbox no: 5084796

TRY 24yr old single mum, looking for male for free time frolics, call me if you're interested, it could be fun! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419851

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Seat Ibiza gets makeover

By Matt Joy

Seat's Ibiza has done a sterling job of bringing buyers into the brand in what is a cut-throat sector of the market. It's also managed to look youthful and sharp, despite having been around since 2008. Now it's time for the Ibiza's second facelift, and it's on the receiving end of plenty of new kit.

The outside gets a mild makeover, while inside there's new materials and a re-sculpted dashboard which helps boost the quality feel alongside greater personalisation options and increased technology. There are also some new engines to choose from and tweaked suspension aimed at improving the ride quality.



It's a sign of confidence from Seat that they have chosen to change so little of the Ibiza's exterior. Compared to the 2012 model, the exterior is distinguished only by LED daytime running lights, LED tail lights and some new alloy wheel options, but otherwise it's the same attractive shape. It's the bold lines that make it stand out from its more conservative rivals, and it's still the best looking car in the class, which no doubt helps its youthful image.

Small cars certainly aren't as small as they used to be, but the Ibiza strikes a good balance between a compact exterior and a cabin that is usefully sized. In the front there's a good driving position, legroom and headroom are good enough even for taller folk, and it's not a narrow cabin either. In the back, it's fine for kids and you can squeeze adults in there too, but three across the back requires a degree of intimacy. Boot space remains at 292 litres which isn't the outright biggest in the class, but it's a good shape and can cope with reasonable demands.

The pick of the new engine line up is 1.0-litre three cylinder, which is now available in turbocharged form with two power outputs, but the larger 1.2 TFSI tested here is still an excellent device even in the lower 90PS form. Quiet and torquey, it behaves much like a larger capacity engine and there's very little to betray the fact that it is turbocharged. It delivers some impressive numbers too; 0-62mph in 10.7 seconds and 57.6mpg combined too.

Elsewhere, the Ibiza switches to electric power steering, and while that does mean the steering is light and a little less feelsome than before, it only takes one corner to realise it is pleasingly accurate and makes for a fun car to drive. The retuned suspension smooths out bigger road imperfections well too.



The pick of the new engine line-up is a 1.0 litre three cylinder, which is now available in turbocharged form.

In this Connect model, you get the full infotainment experience with Apple Car Play, or MirrorLink depending on your choice of smartphone, which seamlessly displays a select number of your phone apps on screen. The upgraded speaker system for a modest £155 is a worthwhile investment too.

Even though the Connect model isn't at the top of the Ibiza tree, it's still generously equipped. The key element is the five-inch infotainment system including navigation and DAB, but there's also 16-inch alloy wheels, aluminium sill trims and tasteful

cloth seating. All Ibizas get air conditioning, a version of the touchscreen, a USB port, Bluetooth and air conditioning too.

The Ibiza is an ideal car for the younger generation with its impressive kit list and smart exterior, but its appeal is much broader than that. It's a cinch to drive and is a doddle park, so it would suit older folks too, and there's enough space in the rear for two children in comfort.

The other big plus point is the range of very frugal petrol engines, some of which manage to break the crucial 100g/km barrier.

Brindley Honda Halesowen have moved to West Bromwich

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RX five-star safety rating

By Anthony Martyn

The new Lexus RX has achieved the top five-star ranking in independent Euro NCAP crash testing. The results also mark the highest test score for pedestrian protection yet achieved by any SUV – large or small.

Euro NCAP made special mention of the 79 per cent recorded by the RX in pedestrian impact testing, which included a maximum points score for leg and pelvic region protection and a notably high result for head protection.

In fact, the new RX goes even further to reduce the risk of accidents with pedestri-

ans, beyond the boundaries of Euro NCAP's current research.

Its Lexus Safety System+ package of active safety and driver assistance features (provided as standard on all RX versions) includes a Pre-Crash Safety system with a pedestrian detection function.

This means that, across a wide range of speeds, the RX will recognise the risk of a collision with a pedestrian in its path, alert the driver and prepare the brakes to deliver maximum stopping power.

And should the driver fail to take action, autonomous emergency braking will be triggered.

Performance

Euro NCAP will begin assessing this type of system during next year, so at present it has no impact on the new RX's overall performance.

Lexus Safety System+ also provides:

- Adaptive Cruise Control, which helps keep the car a safe distance from the car in front, adjusting to even very low speeds in busy traffic.
- Lane Departure Alert/Lane Keep Assist, which monitors lane markings and warns the driver if the RX moves out of lane without the turn indicators being used, adding brief weight to the steering to help a return to the correct course.
- Road Sign Assist, which recognises principal motorway and major road warning and command signs and repeats them on the driver's multi-information display.
- Automatic High Beam, which picks up the lights of oncoming traffic and vehicles ahead and automatically switches to and from high beam to maintain the best forward



The results also mark the highest test score for pedestrian protection yet achieved by any SUV – large or small.

illumination without the risk of dazzling others (the more sophisticated Adaptive High-beam System on Premier grade models adjusts the pattern of high beam lighting).

The new RX also offers a blind spot monitor, rear cross traffic alert and a 360-degree panoramic view monitor, to help the driver achieve a true all-round view of the car's surroundings and nearby vehicles and hazards.

A sway warning detects erratic driving behaviour indicating driver drowsiness or inattention and prompts an alert that driver

might want to take a break from the wheel.

The vehicle's excellent impact performance can be credited to the exceptional strength of its bodyshell. This makes extensive use of strong but lightweight high-tensile steel and a design that's effective in absorbing impact forces and channelling them away from the cabin.

Advanced laser screw welding and adhesive bonding techniques add to the car's high rigidity and robustness, qualities that also contribute to its stable and rewarding handling.



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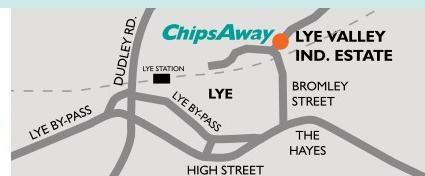
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Late Reds equaliser ruins win for Albion

Liverpool 2 Albion 2

IT was a cruel way to win a point at Anfield, but in the cold light of day Albion will be happy with their draw.

Diovic Origi's 96th-minute equaliser only went in because it ballooned off Gareth McAuley and sent Boaz Myhill the wrong way.

Up until that point the Welsh keeper had been superb, beating away shot after shot as Liverpool attempted in vain to take the chances they kept creating.

Jürgen Klopp's side had 28 shots to Albion's four, so it is startling then that the Baggies were two minutes away from picking up their third win at Anfield in five seasons.

Even more startling is that Albion's fans and players came away from the North West disappointed.

Although Liverpool rained shot after shot down on Myhill's goal, Albion had two spells of pressure, one in each half.

Crucially, they scored during both. With Rondon misfiring, Chris Brunt's set-pieces are becoming Albion's main threat.

Albion's captain is so assured on the ball, watching him for 90 minutes it becomes obvious why Sir Alex Ferguson used him as Manchester United's passing metronome.

Shutting the ball from back to front, left to right, Fletcher rarely loses possession.

Craig Gardner would love to play central midfield but for now he's being restricted to playing on the right.

Albion are 13th, six points above the relegation zone and six points off fifth.

Disruption as weather hits leagues

THE weekend's wet weather cut a swathe through non-league fixtures with numerous matches postponed.

Among them was Rushall Olympic's Evo-Stik Northern Premier game at home to Ilkeston and the First Division One South matches featuring Tividale, away to Gresley, and Chasetown who were due to play at Basford United.

The West Midlands Regional League also suffered.

The weather hit a host of matches which had to be called off including these Premier Division fixtures: AFC Bridgnorth v Gornal Athletic, Bromyard v Stone Old Alleynians, Black Country Rangers v Willenhall, Dudley Sports v Wolverhampton Casuals, Dudley Town v Smethwick Rangers and Shawbury United v Tipton Town.

Jackett waiting to hear on budget

WOLVES have drawn up a list of January transfer targets – but Kenny Jackett says he still does not know how much money will be available to spend on the players.

Eight first team players have been brought in since last season – three permanently and five on loan.

But Wolves' indifferent form in the first half of the season has led Kenny Jackett and Kevin Thelwell to pinpoint areas to strengthen the squad.

Not many additions are expected with Wolves looking to fine tune what they already have.

"We do want to improve, definitely," Jackett said. "We do see the January window as an opportunity

and targets have been made." Jed Wallace, Conor Coady and Nathan Byrne were signed permanently in the summer but the trio are currently out of the first team.

Of their five loan players, Williamson has been recalled by Newcastle, Emiliano Martinez has been a regular but is now injured, while Sheyi Ojo and Adam Le Fondre have been in and out of the side and Grant Holt has largely been an unused substitute.

Ideally Jackett and Thelwell would be able to recreate the impact made by the signing of Benik Afobe from Arsenal for £2million last January, although whether those kinds of funds are available is not yet

clear. Jackett said the final say on finances would still belong to outgoing owner Steve Morgan, who resigned as chairman in September and is looking to sell the club.

When the Wolves manager was asked have discussions been made about Wolves' January budget yet?

"No not particularly," Jackett replied.

"And obviously that's to be decided, exactly what we need to do and will do at the time.

"We have targets and we would like to improve, that's a fact."

"The overall final planning will obviously come from Steve Morgan and we'll get that I'm sure in due course," added Jackett.

13th proves lucky for Old Hales side

Old Halesonians 36 Newport 10
OLD Hales entertained Newport in their 13th league game, which marked the half way stage of the season.

The match followed a dominant but close fought win at Longton last week.

The visit of Newport also marked the continuing contest for the Jack Wassell trophy in memory of the late Jack Wassell, former player of Hales and later Newport before his passing 29 years ago. His son and grandson were present for the game.

The visitors had the upper hand early on but the Hales scrum would be pivotal in the game with front row Matt Young, Sam Jones and skipper Rich Taylor dominating the set piece with the rest of the home forwards.

On 20 minutes the referee issued a Yellow card to Hales prop Young, but such is the strength of the squad, replacement Louis Padian made light of the situation and powered the home pack causing Newport to collapse the scrum just short of the line.

The referee had no option but to award a penalty try converted by stand-off Oli Rayner.

Awarded

Newport were awarded a penalty 55 yards out which was converted.

Rayner took advantage of a penalty from another collapsed scrum to give Hales a half time advantage.

After only two minutes of the restart, and following eight phases of forward play the ball was sent through the hands of every back for Hooper to make space and feed wing Luke Smith who glided over for a brilliantly worked try converted by Rayner.

A second penalty try awarded by the referee was again converted by Rayner.

A Hales line out 10 metres out saw the pack once again catch and drive, rumbling over the line with Breese touching down under the posts 31-3.

The Newport lads were still in the mood to get something out of the game and were rewarded when on 70 minutes the ball was brilliantly worked over for a try under the posts.

It was the Hales pack who had the final word when yet another maul from 20 metres out, saw Loz Breese guide his forwards over the line for



Loz Breese with ball for Old Halesonians with team mate Tom King supporting

his second and Hales final try of the game. Old Halesonians 2nds v Newport 2nds

Meanwhile, Newport 2nds cried off from this league game on Thursday evening leaving Old Hales 2nds no time to arrange a substitute fixture.

Droitwich 2nds 7 Old Halesonians 3rds 40

Old Hales started on the front foot and after several phases of forward play, scrum half George Eccles made one of his trademark breaks from the base of a

ruck. He drew the defence then shot through a gap, his swerving run towards the line wrong-footing the Droitwich fullback allowing him to score under the posts. Steve Deakin slotted over the conversion.

Droitwich forced their way over for try out on the right which was converted.

Joe Bradley crossed the line unopposed for an unconverted try for Old Hales. Leon Naif powered his way over for a try. Gaz Price added the conversion.

Saido is just wasting his career, says Bomber

ALBION legend Tony Brown says Saido Berahino is 'wasting his career' but others think head coach Tony Pulis is 'ruining' the young striker.

Bomber Brown wants Berahino – who played for the under-21s against Swans at Tamworth's Lamb Ground last night – to give more in training in order to force himself into the team.

"He's got a great gift of scoring goals and there's not a lot of players that have got that ability," said Brown, who himself netted 279 times for the club.

"He's got it, we've all seen it, and while he's sitting on the bench he's not able to fulfil his potential and go on and score goals. He's ruining his own career."

Berahino has been on the bench for the last five games, and hasn't featured at all in the last three.

"But Albion are on a four-match unbeaten run and don't appear to be missing last season's top scorer.

"I don't know what's going on behind the scenes in training," said Brown. "But when you're not in the side you should go every day into training performing your best, putting every effort you can into training to try and catch the manager's eye and say 'this is what I'm doing, I'm working my hardest'."

Albion's all-time record scorer doesn't think other clubs will be put off by Berahino's stint out of the starting XI.

"Everybody's looking for goalscorers at the moment and if you look at Saido from the outside, you probably look at what he did last season and say he can score goals," said Brown.

Celtic have their eye on Villa's Kozak

CELTIC have admitted their interest in Villa striker Libor Kozak but said there is no bid imminent.

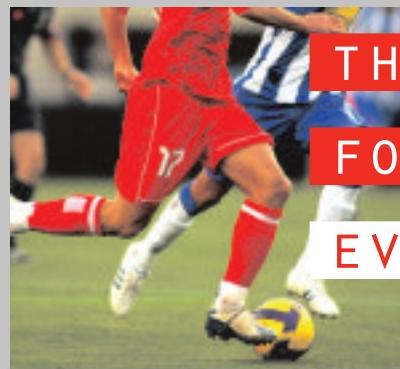
Bhoy's assistant boss John Collins confirmed manager Ronny Deila watched the Czech frontman in the under-21s victory over Derby County at Villa Park on Monday night.

Kozak, who has been frozen out under both Tim Sherwood and Remi Garde this season scored a brace in the game.

Collins said: "Ronny went down and had a look at the game and of course he [Kozak] scored a couple of goals but there's nothing imminent. "We're looking to strengthen all over to be honest."

However, Celtic look likely to return with a bid for the former Lazio striker in January after failing to tempt him in the summer.

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Heathens snap up Kingston

CRADLEY HEATHENS have snapped up Jack Kingston for 2016 – after persuading him to stay in the saddle.

The 20-year-old Lakeside asset was going to give the season a miss, but changed his mind when the Heathens came calling.

Club bosses pressed ahead with the deal once they got confirmation that James Purchase's starting average will be 3.5 – leaving enough room for Kingston under the 40-point limit.

The former Mildenhall man joins Max Clegg, Ashley Morris, Luke Cheshire, James Purchase and Bradley Andrews with just one spot left to fill. The 20-year-old has shown flashes of his potential and will arrive on a 5.84 average.

He said: "I didn't intend on riding this season, to be honest, but getting approached by a club like Cradley was an opportunity I couldn't turn down really.

"After a couple of years in the National League I'm hoping I can finally kick on now."

"I've had some good moments in the last couple of seasons so I know what I'm capable of, it's just I've struggled with consistency too often.

"I can't afford that this season, I need to start scoring points and winning races more regularly and hopefully riding for Cradley can help me do that."

"I've seen the way the likes of Max Clegg, Paul Starke and Ashley Morris have all improved riding for the club. All of them are brilliant riders, and I think a lot of that is down to riding for Cradley." Meanwhile, team boss Pottinger is delighted to welcome Kingston on board and believes he can be a crucial member of their new-look side.

"He's been around for a couple of years now and he's done pretty well," Pottinger said.

Loss means Yeltz miss a chance for playoffs spot

Grantham 2 Halesowen 0

HALESOWEN Town lost their first league game in eight matches at Grantham as they missed the chance to jump into the Evo-Stik Northern Premier League play-off places.

In a match played in wet and windy conditions at the Meres, they found it hard to create chances.

The Yeltz were without Reece Hales and Keyon Reffell, who went back to parent club Kidderminster in the week and struggled to make headway in the first half.

Michael Hollingsworth gave Grantham the lead when he pounced on 29 minutes after Danny Meadow's free-kick had been spilled by Halesowen goalkeeper Shaun Rowley.

Halesowen had some good chances in the second half but failed to capitalise and Stefan Bilyk punished them with the second goal right on the final whistle to make it a miserable trip home.

The result leaves the Yeltz eighth, two points outside the top five.

Late Reds equaliser runs Albion's win

Page 31

Number 13 proves lucky for Hales

Page 31



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Arsenal put another nail in Villa's coffin

Villa 0 Arsenal 2

A sinking Villa became the latest victims of an Arsenal side who moved top of the Premier League by clinically dispatching their hapless hosts.

Olivier Giroud's penalty and Aaron Ramsey's tap-in sent them to the summit, a point ahead of Manchester City and Leicester, following a 2-0 win.

Arsenal's win rarely looked in doubt once the Gunners grabbed an eighth-minute lead.

The returning Theo Walcott, in for Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, outpaced Alan Hutton on the Villa right and tangled with the Scotland international in the area for a penalty. Giroud sent

Football

Brad Guzan the wrong way for his 50th league goal for Arsenal.

Villa's enthusiastic approach counted for nothing and Rudy Gestede nodded off his own line after Giroud's header caught Guzan in no man's land.

Leandro Bacuna ballooned over after Petr Cech flapped at a cross but Arsenal were comfortable and toyed with their hosts.

It was a training game for the Gunners as they passed in front of Villa and waited for their time

to strike again, which came in the 38th minute.

Ramsey's strong challenge on Idrissa Gana set the visitors up on the counter-attack and Walcott fed Mesut Ozil to dummy and race clear through.

He then squared to Wales star Ramsey, who had made up the ground, to tap past the helpless Guzan.

The hosts at least started the second half with renewed vigour.

Cech claimed Carlos Sanchez's 30-yard strike and Jordan Veretout shot over before Gestede glanced a header wide.

Scott Sinclair then wasted a golden chance.

Swimmers come sixth in contest

National League Round 3, Nuneaton

HAVING performed well in the previous two rounds Halesowen Swimming Club travelled to Nuneaton to take part in the final of the West Midlands National League.

This was the first time the team had progressed to the final since 2008 and as expected the quality of the opposition was fierce, with all teams fielding top swimmers from across the region which would make for a tough day for all concerned.

Although Halesowen swimmers were undaunted and gave it their all throughout every swim, the team could only manage a sixth place finish on the day.

First places were hard to come by, but Niamh Larkin showed she could compete with the best of swimmers, winning in the girls 10-11 years 50m breaststroke and going on to grab the 50m backstroke as well.

Other first places were grabbed by Halesowen's Josh Bradley in the men's open 100m butterfly and Richard Spoor match his achievement in the men's open 100m breaststroke.

The club also enjoyed further winning swims which came from the boys 15 years and under freestyle relay team who are Jack Simpson, James Cuthbert, Jakob Baker and Ryan Larkin.

There was also success in the water from the men's open medley relay team who are Mark Laing, Richard Spoor, Josh Bradley and Calum Tinsdale.

Final points score: saw the City of Derby A come out on top with 215, followed by City of Coventry 208. Boldmere A cam in third with their score of 169, while Worcester with 169 took the fourth spot. Behind them were Braunton A who pulled in 154 and finally Halesowen in sixth spot with 131.

Jackett holds high hopes for new blood

KENNY JACKETT says Wolves have 'high hopes' for the current crop of youngsters making their mark with the club.

The Wolves starlets beat Manchester United 3-2 in the league on Saturday to follow up their impressive FA Youth Cup win over MK Dons and an 8-0 thrashing of league leaders Everton.

The likes of Niall Ennis, Connor Ronan and Nicu Carnat have been touted as potential future stars.

And Jackett said there was a good chance that some of the side could follow in the footsteps of the likes of Carl Ikeme and Danny Batth, currently regulars in the first team.

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FOREST FIRE IN LATE LEVELLER

Wolves 1 Notts Forest 1

IN A season of missed opportunities, here was yet another for Wolves.

Having led 1-0 for 65 minutes and created chances, they succumbed to Dexter Blackstock's soft equaliser just 10 minutes from time.

As ever with Wolves this season, it wasn't for a lack of trying that they failed to beat their fairly limited opponents. Sadly, a lack of quality was again their Achilles heel, particularly in central areas.

In the continued absence of the benched Benik Afobe, their most likely source of goals came down the flanks, particularly through man-of-the-moment Jordan Graham, whose wingplay was at times scintillating.

So too were his set pieces, and one such well-placed free-kick was served on a plate for Ethan Ebanks-Landell to nod home the opening goal.

But for all their effort and spirit, Wolves lacked that bit of magic to put the game to bed.

Unbeaten

On the plus side, they are now unbeaten in five, albeit having drawn four of those, and are just two points behind their total of this stage last season.

Against the run of play, it was Wolves who took the lead 15 minutes in where Ebanks-Landell had his header past De Vries.

Forest should have equalised just three minutes later but Matt Mills, a one-time target for Wolves, directed his free header into Ikeme's arms from a Forest free-kick.

Wolves began the second half on top and Henry saw a decent attempt blocked after Le Fondre cutely dinked a lob over his own head. Ebanks-Landell was hungry for a second goal and his back-header from a Graham corner was headed off the line. Graham's set piece deliveries were of an excellent standard, causing Forest no end of problems, and another dangerous free-kick was cleared, before Henry broke clear down the right and saw his cross crucially cut out.

But then came the sucker punch. On 77 minutes, Freedman sent on Jonny Williams and Blackstock. Four minutes later, Blackstock side-footed a corner into the net from three yards.

Paige aiming to hit dream



Paige Goodey, aged 14, shows off the spoils of her success as trainer Darren McDermott

IT won't take long for Dudley's Paige Goodey to chase her next boxing dream after she celebrates her 15th birthday on Saturday.

The now two-time national champion will be looking to catch the eye of the international selectors the very next day at an open talent day.

The livewire teenager from Wren's Nest will be old enough to box for England competitively as a Youth fighter when she turns 15.

And coach Darren McDermott, who won an English title as a professional and represented England as an amateur, is confident she will impress.

He said: "It's England all the way for Paige, that's a definite in my mind. I'd match her

with anyone in the country at her age." The birthday cake may be left in the fridge until McDermott brings her back from the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield, as the hopefuls must be within 2kg of their fighting weight.

But Goodey has achieved most things she has put her mind to, as another accolade in the National Association of Boys & Girls Clubs championships nine days ago suggests.

The High Arcal Secondary School pupil added that to her first national honours, a 46kg England Schools title at the age of 12 before stepping up to Junior level.

McDermott, a former Schools champion, said: "She's proved to be our club's main star."

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